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"LE MYSTERE DES VOIX BULGARES": FOLK MUSIC TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR TROMBONE CHOIR

by

James John Albrecht

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

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Current trombone choir repertoire consists almost entirely of western classical and jazz music. Missing from the trombone ensemble's repertoire are works from outside western choral, symphonic, and jazz idioms and particularly folk music. The addition of Bulgarian folk music contributes to a much needed variety in the current trombone choir repertoire. The use of any ethnic or nationalistic music has both educational and aesthetic value. Like all wellconceived trombone choir music, these Bulgarian folk transcriptions in this paper aid in the development of chamber music skills. This document will discuss how Bulgarian folk music is a good source for trombone choir transcriptions and at the same time, they expose students to a new nationalistic music style that they had not previously encountered. This musical diversity has great value in our pluralistic global society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
List of Figures	V
Introduction	1
1. The History of Modern Bulgarian Folk Music Folk Regions Shop Region Pirin Region Thrace Region	3 9 10 12 13
2. The History of the Trombone Choir and its Contemporary Pedagogical Application	15
3. The Transcriptions Artistic Choices in Transcriptions The Edited Appoggiatura	21 23 27
4. Pedagogical Aspects	29
Conclusion	36
Bibliography	38
Appendices	
 A. Ayde Maro B. Kaval Sviri C. Polegnala E Todora D. Svatba E. Pilentze Pee F. Bre Petrunko (Kyurkchiyski) G. Dilmano ,dilbero H. Dragana, I Slaveya I. Na Ti Mome, Dzivri J. Bre Petrunko (Kutev) K. Subrali Sa Se L. Draginko Lo Panaiyote 	41 47 52 60 65 70 78 81 85 89 90 91

Μ.	Zdravitz	92
Ν.	Leebay Zalibih	93
О.	Denay Muhree	95
Ρ.	Otdolu Eday	96
Q.	Yabulki Kapiet	97
R.	Stano, Stanke	98
S.	Ogreala Mesachinka	100
Τ.	Major Seconds Tuning	101
U.	Exercise Whole Tone Scale in Seconds Exercise	102

Figure	<u>Page</u>
1.1 Excerpt from the Transcription of Kutev's Bre Petrunko (Appendix J)	9
1.2 Excerpt from the Transcription of Kyurkchiyski's <i>Bre Petrunko</i> (Appendix F)	9
1.3 Bulgarian Folk Music Regions	10
1.4 Geranium, You Fragrant Flower. Shop Region Song	11
1.5 Come, Silly, Come Tonight. Pirin Folk Song	12
1.6 <i>The Sun is Doing Down, I've Been Waiting for Dimitar.</i> Thracian Folk Song	13
3.1 3 rd Trombone Part in <i>Svatba</i>	24
3.2 <i>Pilentze Pee</i> ornament example	25
3.3 Pilentze Pee articulations with lyric	27
3.4 Kaval Zviri Notation Alterations with Origin	28
4.1 Example from the transcription of Kyurkchiyski's Bre Petrunko (Appendix F)	31
4.2 Tuning Major Seconds, Whole Tone Exercise	32
4.3 My Lover is Going Out with Someone Else. Nedelino Folk Song	33

Introduction

The modern trombone choir is used almost exclusively in a university or college setting that serves as an extension of techniques learned in an applied studio. This model of pedagogy was established by Emory Remington, Professor of Trombone at the Eastman School of Music from 1922-1971. From the outset of his tenure, Remington used the trombone ensemble as a means of developing a heightened sense of excellence in ensemble performance in regard to uniformity of style, blend, balance, rhythm and intonation.¹ While Remington never arranged works for trombone choir, he encouraged his students to arrange and transcribe music from all periods to provide a balanced repertoire for performance.² It is with this encouragement in mind that I have decided to transcribe Bulgarian folk music for trombone choir.

Bulgarian folk music has a distinctive sound, unlike any western choral music. It uses a different harmonic and rhythmic palette than the western ear is accustomed to. Bulgarian folk music is unique in that much of the music incorporates dissonant intervals as freely as consonant ones. In western music we are accustomed to seconds resolving, whereas the Bulgarian music sounds simply float.³ Rhythmically, most of Bulgarian folk music is written in an

¹ Marcellus, John. "Eastman Trombone Choir." Eastman School of Music. http://www.esm.rochester.edu/trombone/ChoirHistory.php (accessed February 17, 2012).

² Remington, Emory, and Donald Hunsberger. *The Remington warm-up studies*. Athens, Ohio: Accura Music, 1980. 5-7.

³ Marshall, Ingram. liner notes. *Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares.* The Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir. Nonesuch 9 79165-2. CD,1987.

asymmetrical meter which may present challenges to the performers. Also, this music frequently uses unique vocal techniques that are challenging but nonetheless effective on trombone. Unlike western choirs, which use vibrato most of the time, this music requires a straight tone. Vibrato is used more sparingly as an expressive device ranging from a microtone to a major second.⁴

There is a significant educational value to performing and studying this music. Along with the musical elements, I hope to increase knowledge of Bulgarian culture. Like all effective trombone choir music, it develops chamber music techniques such as sensitivity to style, articulation, intonation, and ensemble awareness. This document will discuss the ways in which Bulgarian folk music is effective for trombone choir transcriptions by dealing with those elements. While most of the existing trombone choir repertoire is written in four or more parts, most arranged Bulgarian folk music is in three parts. As these three part songs are intended for a choir setting, they can also be performed as trios which add much needed music to the repertoire. This document will also present a brief history of the trombone choir and a short synopsis of the history of Bulgarian folk music. This will enhance the presentation of pedagogical aspects which address the major challenges this music presents.

⁴ Marshall, Ingram. liner notes. *Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares*. The Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir. Nonesuch 9 79165-2. CD,1987.

Chapter 1: The History of Modern Bulgarian Folk Music

Comprehension of a work's origins within a genre and historical context are vital for two reasons. First, this context affects a performer's insight into the importance of place and regional difference. Second, this appreciation leads to a wider world view of the music, the composer, and its origins.

Bulgarian folk music has a unique history different from most music studied in higher educational institutions in the United States. The western world was first exposed to the sounds of Bulgarian folk music when Swiss producer, Marcel Cellier in 1975, released an album he had been working on for fifteen years entitled, "Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares" (The Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices). This album featured arrangements of Bulgarian folk songs that were used by the Bulgarian State Radio & Television Female Vocal Choir and the Phillip Kutev National Folklore Ensemble. Most of the transcriptions created for this document have come from this album.

Both of these ensembles were created by the Bulgarian State in the early fifties after the Communist party took control in 1944. Before World War II, folk music was looked down upon by the social elite as music sung mainly in the villages by local citizens, often portraying poverty and hardship. After the war, the communist party realized how important performing arts were in helping to establish its new ideals and culture, particularly the music of common people, which fit the Communist Party's ideas perfectly. In formulating an "ideal" communist state, art was viewed as equally important to the humanities and the sciences. The first Bulgarian communist party leader, Gerogi Dimitrov, stated that

3

the support of musical arts would, "help raise the cultural level of our people; of our youth – as a mighty factor in the construction of a new socialist society in our country."⁵ Out of these principles, the state sought to create propaganda using folk music to help represent Bulgaria as the prosperous, positive, and progressive nation, which the newly formed communist party had promised.

Leading the way in this movement was Bulgarian composer, Filip Kutev(1903-1982). At the close of World War II, Bulgaria began a movement toward urbanization. Citizens migrated from the smaller villages to larger cities in their search of employment. Kutev was concerned that the oral tradition of Bulgarian folklore would soon be forgotten and become a lost art. According to his wife Maria Kuteva, it was Filip Kutev's dream to preserve Bulgaria's folklore tradition by bringing singing and dancing to the stage in a modified, contemporary format.⁶ In 1950 a group of composers including Kutev, proposed a national folk ensemble be established, modeled after a similar ensemble in the Soviet Union named "Piatnitzki".⁷ In 1951, the government assigned Kutev to form the Filip Kutev National Folklore Ensemble. Unlike earlier state-funded folk groups that were locally organized, this was the first professional ensemble supported on a national level.

⁵ Krüstev, Venelin Georgiev. *Bulgarian music*. Sofia: Sofia-Press, 1978,183.

⁶ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006,138.

⁷ Kuteva, Maria. "*Predgovor.*" *in Durzhaven Ansambul za Narodni Pesni i Tantsi: I Svituk*. Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1958, 1-2.

In the beginning, it was difficult to find musicians. Kutev pursued untrained voices in order to preserve the traditional manner of folk singing. Bulgarians call this style "open-throat singing."⁸ The name would seem to be a contradiction just merely from how the western ear would describe it. Classically-trained singers use a similar term to explain the need for openness and relaxation. However in the Bulgarian vocal technique, the term describes a more athletic, aggressive expiratory technique. At the initial audition, five hundred candidates were judged over a period of five days and ultimately, only seven singers and a few instrumentalists and dancers were chosen. To find more of these specialized performers, Kutev traveled throughout Bulgaria visiting the smaller villages. Eventually, he was able to complete his ensemble which consisted of singers, dancers, and an orchestra. Ten months after its founding, the Filip Kutev National Folklore Ensemble gave its debut performance and three months later, an extravagant concert at Bulgaria Hall, home of the Sofia Philharmonic.⁹ The concert was a musical revue of new arrangements of traditional folk songs sung and played, with dancers, elaborate costumes and lighting effects. The ensemble was much more refined than the traditional folk music and appealed to a much more sophisticated audience as well as supported the ideological aims of the Party.

⁸ Kuteva, Maria. *"Predgovor." in Durzhaven Ansambul za Narodni Pesni i Tantsi: I Svituk*. Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1958, 1-2.

⁹ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, 142.

A month before the Kutev Ensemble had its first performance, Georgi Boyadzhiev founded the Ensemble for Folk Songs at Bulgarian Radio and Television in 1952. This ensemble was similar to the Kutev Ensemble with the exception that its primary purpose was to record authentic and arranged music of choral folk songs for the State's media outlets: radio and later television. It was formed much like the Kutev Ensemble, searching for and finding its members through the audition process. Sometimes Kutev and Boyadzhiev traveled together around the country in search of new talent.¹⁰ This search for talent allowed those without formal training to become professional musicians.

Forming an all-female choir was neither Kutev's nor Boyadzhiev's original intent, but rather was a consequence of the audition process. There simply were not as many qualified men available as compared to the number of women selected for their ensembles. As a result, they chose to use a female chorus as the featured ensemble. Both ensembles would rehearse four to six days a week from about 9:00AM to 2:00PM with a fifteen to thirty minute break every hour.¹¹ This rehearsal schedule is very similar to how a modern orchestra rehearses today.

These groups quickly became the model for new ensembles throughout the country. By the 1980s, virtually every large town in Bulgaria had its own professional folk ensemble. This kind of demand for ensemble folk performers

¹⁰ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006,145.

¹¹ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, 179.

necessitated the creation of schools in which to train them. Two high schools for the study of folk music and a High Musical-Pedagogical Institute (a postsecondary conservatory) were created in the 1970s to educate these musicians in village music traditions.¹²

The music which these groups perform is called *obrabotki*. Any folk music that is arranged, enhanced or refined is called *obrabotki*.¹³ Bulgarian composers who wrote *obratbotki* were trained in the art of western music but sought to use their classical training while preserving the style and aesthetics of the original folk song in their arrangements.¹⁴ Most folk music in Bulgaria was either monophonic or diaphonic (usually a melody with a drone.) Composers of *obrabotki* would hear the original folk song and transcribe it. Then they were able to harmonize the melody or arrange the song and even add new material composed in the essence of the tradition.

Filip Kutev is considered the father of Bulgarian concert folk music, not only for founding the National Folklore Ensemble, but also for his immense contribution to *obrabotki*. All folk songs were about daily life (i.e. love, work, and war) or festive activities (i.e. Christmas, weddings, and praying for rain). If the

¹² Rice, Timothy. *May it fill your soul: experiencing Bulgarian music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, 28.

¹³ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, 196.

¹⁴ Ahmedaja, Ardian. *European voices I: multipart singing in the Balkans and the Mediterranean*. Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2008, 197.

lyrics did not meet Kutev's poetic standard, his wife, Maria Kuteva, would revise them. ¹⁵ Kuteva wrote in the preface of the Kutev Ensemble's 1958 Songbook.

In principle the foreign words have been eliminated, wherever this is possible. There are, however, several songs whose texts have remained in dialect, because the sound of the melody is very firmly connected with the sound of the text (Rhodope songs), or [the dialect] is instrumental to the color of the song (humorous songs) – in these it has been possible to allow several foreign words to remain, especially if they are also more Bulgarian.¹⁶

The older style of Kutev is relatively simple and conservative using a drone and triadic harmonies, compared to the more dissonant and modulatory approach of younger arrangers. Kutev's folk music was so cherished that other Bulgarian composers would make new *obrabotki* based on his.¹⁷ An example of this is Kutev's *obrabotka "Bre Petrunko*" from the Shop region that is transcribed for trombone choir in Appendix J. Compare it to Krasimir Kyurkchiyski's version of *"Bre Petrunko*" that is transcribed for trombone choir in Appendix F. Figure 1.1 is an excerpt from the transcription from the simpler Kutev version while Figure 1.2 is Kyurkchiyski's version which combines Kutev's *"Bre Petrunko*" (trombones

¹⁵ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, 232.

¹⁶ Kuteva, Maria. *"Predgovor." in Durzhaven Ansambul za Narodni Pesni i Tantsi: I Svituk*. Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1958, 1-2.

¹⁷ Ahmedaja, Ardian. *European voices I: multipart singing in the Balkans and the Mediterranean*. Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2008,199.

3 and 4) with another Shop song "Yana ludo mamila" (trombones 1 and 2). Kyurkchiyski's use of two two-part songs from the Shop region is an innovative use of simple *obrabotki*, creating a more complicated polyphonic texture and sounding more dissonant.



Figure 1.1 Excerpt from the Transcription of Kutev's Bre Petrunko (Appendix J)

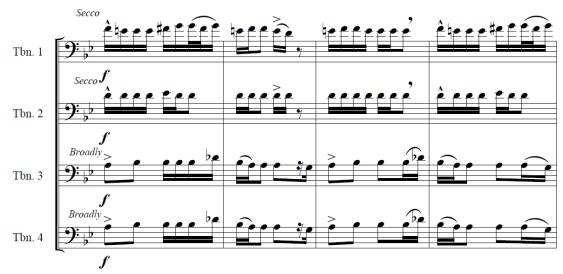


Figure 1.2 Excerpt from the Transcription of Kyurkchiyski's *Bre Petrunko* (Appendix F)

Folk Regions

The *obrabotki* and other folk songs transcribed by Kutev and his disciples come from all over Bulgaria. Bulgaria is most commonly divided into seven folk music regions (Figure 1.3). Each region has its own history and characteristic sound. Most of these regions were created from the natural boundaries formed by mountain ranges and rivers. Because most of the folk songs that Kutev used are from the Shop, Pirin, and Thrace regions, my study is focused on those areas. The Shop and Pirin regions are the only areas in Bulgaria that use diaphonic harmony. The music of the Thrace region, along with that from the rest of Bulgaria's folk regions, is predominately monophonic.



Figure 1.3 Bulgarian Folk Music Regions

Shop Region

The Shop region is roughly located where Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia come together. The region encompasses the city of Sofia which is the capital of Bulgaria. This region has the loudest style of singing in southwestern Bulgaria. Some women sing a melody in a simple fashion while others choose to use many

vocal effects and ornamentation. Some of these embellishments may include mordents, turns, shakes and glottal stops.¹⁸ Shop songs commonly consist of a melodic line above a drone and sound very dissonant to the western ear. The melody is quite narrow in range, usually consisting of only three pitches separated by a minor third. Usually, the second voice, singing the drone, will move to the subtonic, giving the range of the song a fourth. This results in a tetrachord built on the modes of Dorian, Phrygian and Ionian combined with a chromatic tetrachord with an augmented second between the second and third scale degrees.¹⁹ Singers of this style do not hear their music as "dissonant" but refer to this style as "pleasant" and "smooth".²⁰ The judgment of "dissonance" versus "pleasantness" shows the subjectivity of western conceptions of harmony. Figure 1.4 is an example of a typical Shop song.



Figure 1.4 *Geranium, You Fragrant Flower.* Shop Region Song from Kaufman, Nikolaj Ja. *Bălgarskata mnogoglasna narodna pesen*. Sofija: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1968, 29.

¹⁸ Rice, Timothy. "Polyphony in Bulgarian Folk Music." Ph.D. Diss., University of Washington, 1977, 79.

¹⁹Litova-Nikolova, Lydia. *Bulgarian Folk Music.* Sofia, Bulgaria: Marin Drinov Academic Pub. House, 2004, 54.

²⁰ Rice, Timothy. *Music in Bulgaria: experiencing music, expressing culture*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004, 31.

Pirin Region

The Pirin region is located in the southwest corner of Bulgaria directly South of the Shop region. The folk music from this area is similar to the Shop region in that it is most commonly sung by women and is diaphonic yet the melody uses a wider range resulting in songs that are more consonant. Tim Rice, a Bulgarian scholar, states this region can be

Defined by two styles: 1) a tonic drone style with occasional unisons on the subtonic and 2) a moveable drone style in which the drone may lie on any degree of the scale from the subtonic to the fifth above the tonic.²¹

In addition, there are no songs with a range of only a second as in the Shop region. Most often their songs are sung in intervals of a third but can be wider, with a few exceptions, and reach the interval of an octave.²² Figure 1.5 is an example of the moveable drone style from the Pirin Region.

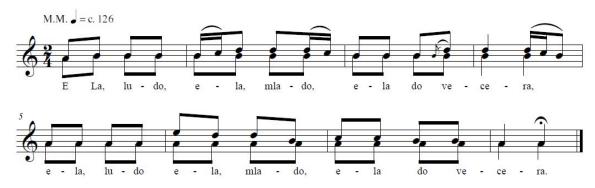


Figure 1.5 *Come, Silly, Come Tonight.* Pirin Folk Song from Kaufman, Nikolaj Ja. *Bălgarskata mnogoglasna narodna pesen*. Sofija: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1968, 88.

²¹ Rice, Timothy. "Polyphony in Bulgarian Folk Music." Ph.D. Diss., University of Washington, 1977, 135.

²² Rice, Timothy. "Polyphony in Bulgarian Folk Music." Ph.D. Diss., University of Washington, 1977, 129.

Thrace Region

The Thrace region is the largest folk region in Bulgaria. It is a plain beginning just east of Sofia, running south of the Balkan Mountains, and north of the Rhodope Mountains. It reaches as far to the Black Sea in the east and stretches south to the European part of Turkey and northeastern Greece. Because of its size and antiquity (it was a very important region in the ancient and medieval periods), the Thracian area has a significant influence on neighboring areas.

The most distinguishing feature of Thracian folk songs is the prevalence of monophonic songs that are non-measured.²³ Thracian singers have a warmer timbre than the strident Shop singers. They tend to ornament their melodies with short grace notes and a narrow vibrato on long notes.²⁴

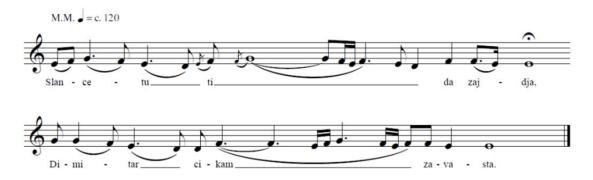


Figure 1.6 *The Sun is Going Down, I've Been Waiting for Dimitar.* Thracian Folk Song from Stoin, Elena. *Muzikalnofolklorni dialekti v Bûlgariya.*, Sofia, 1981, 258.

²³ Litova-Nikolova, Lydia. *Bulgarian Folk Music.* Sofia, Bulgaria: Marin Drinov Academic Pub. House, 2004, 35.

²⁴ Rice, Timothy. *Music in Bulgaria: experiencing music, expressing culture*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004, 37.

Figure 1.6 is an example of a Thracian labor song. Both men and women sing these songs, however, women tend to have a larger repertoire. This can be directly attributed to the fact that women are taught songs as young girls by their grandmothers, mothers and older sisters as they go about doing their daily house chores. A typical job for men was that of a herder. This vocation realistically frees their hands to play folk instruments. During the spring and summer months, herders spend weeks away from their home tending sheep and/or goats and entertain themselves by playing music.²⁵ Popular instruments used in this area are the *kaval* (a rim-blown, wooden flute), *gaida* (a bagpipe), and the *gadulka*(a type of fiddle played upright). These instruments are all considered shepherds' instruments.

Thracian songs became the foundation of Filip Kutev's folk choir repertoire as this music had influenced other regions in Bulgaria in previous centuries.²⁶ The sonorous monophonic melodies made it easier to harmonize as opposed to the limitations of the diaphonic, drone songs of western Bulgaria.

²⁵ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, 85.

²⁶ Buchanan, Donna Anne. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006,158.

Chapter 2: The History of the Trombone Choir and its Contemporary Pedagogical Application

The use of the trombone choir as a performing ensemble has been in existence for more than four hundred years. The earliest ensemble parts labeled for trombone players come from Italy by Francesco Corteccia specifically for the marriage celebrations of Cosimo de' Medici and Eleonora of Toledo in 1539 and in *Symphonie sacrae* by Giovanni Gabrielli from 1597.²⁷ *No. 16, Canzon quarti toni a15* from the Gabrielli work requires twelve trombones. By the seventeenth century Gabrielli's popularity at St. Mark Cathedral in Venice inspired other composers to follow suit and begin writing for the trombone ensemble. Tiburtio Massaino, maestro di cappella at Lodi from 1600-1608, wrote *Canzona No. 33* for 8 trombones in 1608 and Biagio Marini, a violin virtuoso who worked at St Mark's Cathedral in 1615, wrote *Canzona Op.8 No. 3* for four trombones in 1626.

By the end of the seventeenth century, there were a number of factors contributing to the decline of trombone usage. Most court trombone positions were eliminated in England after the civil war in 1642 for economic reasons. Northern Italy was struck by the plague from 1630-1631 and during the recovery time, most composers found profit by composing opera for the theatre rather than music to be played in churches. In Germany, the Thirty Years War put a tremendous stress on the economy. German aristocracy could no longer afford large-scale works commonly utilizing trombones and had to settle for smaller ensembles. The trombone was sporadically being used in all of these countries but its importance was greatly minimized until the turn of the eighteenth century

²⁷ Herbert, Trevor. *The trombone*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, 91.

in Germany with the introduction of "Stadtpfeifers". These town pipers were musicians who performed on various civic and ceremonial occasions, including playing music from towers (Turmmusik) or playing in church services.²⁸ Notable composers of this style were Daniel Speer (1636-1707) and Johann Pezel (1639-1694). In 1722, Moravian Protestants relocated to Saxony and founded a community called Herrnhut.²⁹ Much of their worship was held in outside venues and to help support this outdoor singing, they used wind instruments which were inspired by Stadtpfeifers and Turmmusik. The use of the trombone in these choirs is first mentioned in 1731. Later in 1764, the documented use of the term Posaunenchöre (trombone choir) is used.³⁰ Although the name would suggest that it was a trombone choir, at its inception it was not exclusively for the trombone. The group used other wind instruments.³¹ In 1747, Moravians established thriving settlements in the United States located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and Nazareth and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. They brought with them all of their traditions including the trombone choir.³²

²⁸ Guion, David M. *A history of the trombone*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2010, 139.

²⁹ Guion, David M. *A history of the trombone*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2010, 140.

³⁰ Bosch, Ben van den, and C. Daniel Crews. *The origin and development of the trombone-work of the Moravian churches in Germany and all the world*. Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Music Foundation, 1990, 4-7.

³¹ Jerome, Leaman. "The Trombone Choir of the Moravian Church." *International Trombone Association Journal* January (1977), 48-50.

³² Herbert, Trevor. *The trombone*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, 231.

In the nineteenth century, the town of Linz, Austria had two traditions specifically for a trombone ensemble. One was to play music from the tower of the town hall on All Souls' Day and the other was to play *equali* for funeral services. *Equale* is a term describing a short, chordal piece for a trombone ensemble. It was originated by Franz Xaver Gloggl, the Kapellmeister at the cathedral in Linz. Thanks to Gloggl, Beethoven composed his only piece for trombone ensemble titled *Drei Equale* in 1813.³³ By the late 1800s, trombone ensemble works were scarce with the exception of the continued use in the Moravian community.

Using a trombone choir as a pedagogical device is a relatively modern concept. The modern trombone choir is an ensemble used in higher educational institutions as an extension of the private studio of a teacher to apply skills learned to an ensemble setting. This model of pedagogy was established by Emory Remington, Professor of Trombone at the Eastman School of Music from 1922-1971. Remington used the trombone ensemble in his teaching from the beginning of his tenure as a means of developing excellence in ensemble performance in regards to uniformity of style, blend, balance, rhythm and intonation.³⁴ For almost fifty years, Remington produced successful students who contributed to all facets of the music profession including performers, composers, arrangers and teachers. His students, who later became teachers at universities,

³³ Herbert, Trevor. *The trombone*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. 149.

³⁴ Marcellus, John. "Eastman Trombone Choir." Eastman School of Music. http://www.esm.rochester.edu/trombone/ChoirHistory.php (accessed February 17, 2012).

were disciples of trombone choir advocacy and developed their own choirs. Today, trombone choirs are a part of most music schools and conservatories where trombone is taught.

At the outset, repertoire was rare for this type of ensemble. Remington encouraged his students to transcribe and arrange pieces for the ensemble. He employed this as yet another valuable educational device. Many students are first exposed to much of the classical repertoire, jazz repertoire, and even world music through transcriptions and arrangements for trombone choir. This result is an opportunity for the student to come into contact with previously unfamiliar material and for the student to further seek out the history of these works. Some notable classical pieces include Blair Bolinger's arrangement of the *Second Movement* from Brahms' Third Symphony³⁵ and Donald Miller's arrangement of *Achieved is the Glorious Work*³⁶ from Haydn's Creation. Jazz arrangements include *Tribute to J.J.* by Robert Elkjer³⁷ and Eric Crees' arrangement of

A distinct pedagogical advantage in playing with a trombone choir is that the group can accommodate all types of players. It is the only ensemble in which music education majors, both classical and jazz performance majors, and non-

³⁵ Bollinger, Blair. *Brahms Symphony #3, Second Movement for Trombone Octet.* Collingswood, NJ. CEC Music.

³⁶ Miller, Donald. Achieved is the Glorious Work. Ithaca, NY. Ensemble Publications.

³⁷ Elkjer, Bob. *Tribute to J.J.*. New York, NY. Alessi Publications.

³⁸ Crees, Eric. Someone to Watch Over Me. Conventry, England. Warwick Music Limited.

music majors at all different skill levels can play trombone together. This widely encourages an exchange of ideas from many different musical backgrounds and their perspectives.

Playing in a homogenized ensemble, such as a trombone choir, greatly aids in honing the student's ear as to what to listen for. To the novice player playing in a large band or orchestra, it can be a bit overwhelming to have so many different timbres to digest. The most critical entity in playing in any ensemble is training the student how vitally important it is to listen to others in the group rather than oneself. Rehearsing with an ensemble allows the student to see how he/she can best fit in with the group and contribute to its success.

Further, playing in a trombone ensemble encourages the development of playing with a unified section sound which for the student, is best achieved by listening. It does not matter what kind of equipment is used or if the student is of jazz or classical background. Playing with a great sound will blend with not only another trombone, but with any instrument benefitting the other ensembles in which a student might choose to play. Performing with a great sound lends itself to playing with great intonation. Much of what a trombone section does in orchestra and wind ensembles is playing chords and providing a firm harmonic foundation. A trombone choir is the perfect laboratory to dissect different quality chords and to understand the pitch tendencies of each individual note. In addition to creating a universal sound, the trombone choir teaches the student to play with a wide variety of matching articulations and note lengths. These in turn require students to continue developing aural awareness.

19

Finally, playing in a trombone choir presents music which frequently is more challenging and virtuosic than the music a student could encounter in an orchestra or wind ensemble. Unfortunately, large ensemble repertoire for a trombonist can be disappointingly easy and often uninspiring. If the most difficult music a student sees comes from these type of ensembles, he or she is more likely to be less motivated and become deficient in areas of musicianship and technique. In the trombone choir, students are able to play great melodies and counter-melodies which help promote and encourage great music making and yet still require students to extend their technical abilities.

Chapter 3: The Transcriptions

Table 3.1 is a list of the collection of transcriptions included in this document. Introducing students to these songs will not only continue to enhance ensemble playing, but will also encourage them to seek out more history and information about Bulgaria and her unique folk song tradition. Studying unfamiliar music cultures helps students break free of traditional styles and genres. This enhances their musical growth contributing a much needed diversity to their base of musical knowledge. American culture has been dependent on the contribution of immigrants and other cultures to enrich our own national art, music, and literature. Adding Bulgarian folk music to the trombone choir repertoire fits into this cultural heritage.

Name	Translation	Time	Folk	Composer
		(min)	Region	
Ayde, Maro	Let's Go, Maro	2:00	Thrace	Denev
Kaval Sviri	The Flute Plays	2:30	Thrace	Lyondev
Polegnala E Todora	Todora Has Lied Down	3:00	Thrace	Kutev
Svatba	Wedding	1:30	Thrace	Todorov
Pilentze Pee(Pay)	A Little Bird Sings	2:30	Shop	Kyurkchiyski
Bre Petrunko	Hey Pertrunko	2:00	Shop	Kyurkchiyski
Dilmano, dilbero	Dilmano, Beautiful Girl	1:30	Shop	Kyurkchiyski
Dragana I Slaveya	Dragana and the	3:20	Shop	Kutev
	Nightingale			
Na Ti Mome, Dzivri	Here Girl, The boots	1:30	Pirin	Stefanov

 Table 3.1 Bulgarian Folk Song Transcriptions

The Bulgarian folksongs listed above are very adaptable for trombone choir for a number of reasons. The trombone has the great ability to bend pitches

and to minutely adjust tuning of dissonant harmonies. Further, the trombone is the only wind instrument that gracefully reproduces certain vocal ornaments because of the slide. It can also create *glissandi* that valve instruments are not capable of. Furthermore, there is no text painting. Lyrics do not reflect what the music is doing so the music can stand alone without text. The range of the trombone lends itself well to all vocal writing. From its advent, the idiomatic use of trombone was found to be desirable in vocal music to double voices.³⁹ And finally, as Bulgarian women create a uniform and unique sound in their performance, a trombone choir can equally achieve its own uniform and unique sound. Homogenized sounds can be lackluster and dull but the timbre, clarity and wide tonal range of a trombone choir make it more appealing to a wider audience than other brass choirs. The trombone is able to achieve this due to its physical size which gives it a range which encompasses more than four octaves. In addition, the trombone's cylindrical bore gives it more clarity than those instruments with a conical bore. Although the trumpet is cylindrical, its high tessitura and limited range create a more strident and penetrating sound than the trombone. Listening to high pitches for an extended period of time can result in ear fatigue. Consequently, this is why trumpet choirs are not common with the exception of using them for fanfares (i.e. herald trumpets). Conical instruments, such as the horn, euphonium and tuba, have a much mellower tone which has a tendency to result in a lack of clarity, especially in the lower registers. Listening to homogenized mellow sounds can be pleasant, but may not lead to an exciting musical performance for the listener.

³⁹ Herbert, Trevor. *The trombone*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, 113.

Artistic Choices in Transcriptions

When preparing transcriptions, there are many factors which should be taken into consideration. These would include key, articulations, and dynamics. The dynamics markings chosen for these transcriptions come predominantly from audio recordings and/or videos of live performances.

Tessitura was most important when determining the key signature. Since this music was originally sung by altos and sopranos in close range, the original keys could not be preserved. As written, the tessitura is too high for the trombone and lowering it an octave can create a lack of clarity, especially in narrow intervals. As trombone choirs include bass trombonists, it was critical not to write these parts too high.

Key selection was also determined by how certain ornaments lay on the slide. The trombone's ability to play *glissandi* and natural slurs are techniques frequently misunderstood. All the *glissandi* in Bulgarian folk music start a half-step or whole-step below or above the goal note and are executed quickly. This can be cumbersome if a *glissando* starts past fifth position on the trombone slide. In the third trombone part in *Svatba* (Figure 3.1), the grace note is performed using a *glissando* from a C-sharp to D (2nd to 1st position), B to C-sharp (4th to 2nd position) and A to B-flat (2nd to 1st position). When a grace note wider than a major second occurs, a natural slur is used (i.e. the C-sharp to B-flat and vice versa) in the *Svatba* example. A natural slur can occurs on the trombone when a slur is between two notes on different partials.

23







Figure 3.1 3rd Trombone Part in Svatba

Another challenge is discovered when attempting to transcribe music that is passed down through generations. The singers have a tendency to aurally create ornaments that are almost impossible to notate. Even in the Kutev Ensemble and the State Radio Ensemble, compositions were often learned by aural imitation with a written manuscript provided to aid them.⁴⁰ This is a key factor in what makes these songs so uniquely beautiful. The original harmonies and techniques were not limited by harmonic or notation rules.

Figure 3.1 is the first and third trombone part from the transcription of *Pilentze Pee* containing one of these ornaments that are nearly impossible to notate but possible to replicate on the trombone. This particular trill-like ornamentation is called *tresene* in Bulgarian, translated means "shaking".⁴¹ It is

⁴⁰ Buchanan, Donna. *Performing Democracy: Bulgarian Music and Musicians in Transition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006, 218.

⁴¹ Litova-Nikolova, Lydia. *Bulgarian Folk Music*. Sofia, Bulgaria: Marin Drinov Academic Pub. House, 2004, 51.

created on the trombone by starting in an alternate position, then following with a natural slur to a half-step below and finally returning to the home position with a *glissando*. This achieves the desired articulation which represents the vocal ornamentation in a way that no other wind instrument can.



Figure 3.2 *Pilentze Pee* ornament example

When transcribing vocal works, lyrics have much influence over the choices made on articulation. Due to the fact these pieces are sung in Bulgarian, which often times used an older untranslatable dialect, recreating the diction and style was particularly challenging. Special care was taken in the process and multiple recordings were listened to. Table 3.2 is a chart describing the articulation markings used in the transcriptions along with an explanation of how they relate to the Bulgarian text.

> + 	Accent – This marking is generally used when the Bulgarian singers sing a harder consonant that does not affect the length of the note.	
	Staccato – This is used for a note that is sung with a value shorter than the note value it is above.	
- 	Tenuto – This marking represents a syllable from the folk songs that were sung full value.	
	Accent with Tenuto – This articulation is used when the Bulgarian word has a hard consonant and the syllable is sung full value.	
	Marcato – This marking represents a hard consonant and short vowel, performed accented and short.	
	Marcato with Staccato – This marking is used when Bulgarian singers use a glottal stop. Using a tongue- stop is the best way to recreate this effect on the trombone.	
	Slur – The slur usually happens over, at minimum, two notes of the same vowel.	
	Glissando – Two notes with a line between them represent a smear. In Bulgarian music, the <i>glissando</i> is a vocal ornament that is always executed quickly and attention should never be brought to it.	
	Mordent – This ornament is performed by rapidly playing the principal note, then the next higher note according to the key signature, then return to the principal note. Written out as follows:	

Table 3.2 Articulation and Ornament Markings

Figure 3.3 is an example taken from the transcription of *Pilentze Pee*. This illustrates the trombone part, along with the Bulgarian text, using four of the articulations and a *glissando* as described in Table 3.2.



Figure 3.3 Pilentze Pee articulations with lyric

The Edited Appoggiatura

Today's musicians tend to play all grace notes as if they were acciaccaturas. Yet, sometimes grace notes are meant to be performed as appoggiaturas. An acciaccatura is a quickly played non-chord tone that resolves by step. The definition of the word "acciaccatura" is derived from the Italian word, *acciaccare* which means "to crush".⁴² An appoggiatura is a non-chord tone that is also resolved by step, but is melodically more important and consequently, played longer in duration than the acciaccatura.⁴³ Its origin is from the Italian verb, *appoggiare*, which means "to lean upon." In the original notation of these

⁴² Seletsky, Robert. "Acciaccatura." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00101 (accessed March 12, 2012).

⁴³ "Appoggiatura." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01118 (accessed March 12, 2012).

obrabotki, grace notes are generally performed as an "appoggiatura". To avoid any confusion in the transcriptions, the "appoggiatura" heretofore is written as a full-valued note in order not to confuse with the acciaccatura. Figure 3.3 is an example of this alteration in the transcription *Kaval Zviri*. The grace note is changed to a sixteenth note which achieves the same intended effect.

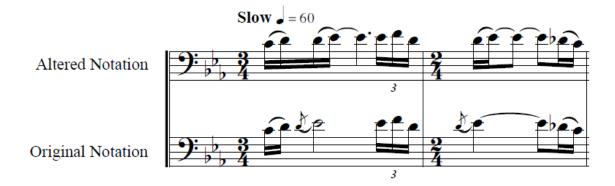


Figure 3.3 Kaval Zviri Notation Alterations with Original

The combination of Bulgarian folk songs and the trombone choir works well because the idiomatic use of the trombone gracefully reproduces the vocal ornamentation inherent in the *obrabotki*. The range and the timbre of the trombone make it an ideal instrument to reproduce the unique and beautiful sounds of Bulgarian traditional folk singing.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Aspects

Aural image and emulation are the most important aids to performing these transcriptions of Bulgarian folk music. Most of these transcriptions come from the audio CDs entitled *Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares*, a compilation of songs sung by the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir, the Kutev Ensemble, and the Pirin Ensemble. In addition, there are countless videos of Bulgarian choirs singing their folk music on YouTube. Access to YouTube and the pervasive use of this free resource by students and teachers alike means that the reproduced performances of Bulgarian folk singing are available, easy to come by, and free unlike audio CDs.

The articulation markings added to the transcriptions help aid in the recreation of this Bulgarian vocal style, but nothing can adequately replace the model these recordings can generate in one's mind. The importance of listening to the original folk songs cannot be overly stressed. Style, accent, tempo and other inflections are best learned first-hand by listening to the original music. The Bulgarian singers are trained in this way, with arrangements as an aid to aural comprehension. Without the aspect of listening, it would be a bit like trying to train to speak foreign languages by merely reading a book. Technology can aid in this process of both written and aural training.

In addition to the nine trombone choir transcriptions of Bulgarian *obrabotki*, there are also ten arrangements excerpted from the Kutev Ensemble's 1958 Songbook and transcribed for playing in a trombone choir or trio (Table 4.1). This songbook was specifically compiled so that other folk ensembles could

29

use and perform these pieces.⁴⁴ All transcriptions are by Filip Kutev and are in three-part voicing. These trombone transcriptions were inspired by the many Bach chorales already transcribed for trombone quartets and frequently used as warm-up exercises in trombone choirs. Most of these pieces are simpler and shorter in length but nonetheless, they address the same issues of tuning, ornamentation and rhythm as the larger trombone choir transcriptions have. These pieces may also be used as warm-up exercises much like the Bach chorales. They can act as an aid in the preparation of tackling the larger works.

Bulgarian Name	English Translation	Folk Region
1) Bre Petrunko	Hey, Petrunko	Shop
2) Otdolu Eday	He's Coming	Shop
3) Stano, Stanke	Stanke, Red Apple	Shop
4) Zelen Zdravitz	Green Clover	Shop
5) Subrali Sa Se	Come Together	Thrace
6) Denay Muhree	Denay, eh	Thrace
7) Yabulki Kapiet	Apples are Falling	Thrace
8) Leebay Zalibih	I Fell In Love With a Girl	North Bulgaria
9) Ogreala Mesachinka	This Shining Moon	North Bulgaria
10) Draginko Lo Panaiyote	Why Are You Sad?	Dobrudzha

Table 4.1 Trombone Trio/Choir Collection

One of the more difficult aspects in performing Bulgarian folk music is the need to become comfortable with the existing dissonances and then playing them in tune. In Bulgarian folk songs, the interval of a major second is most common. Although this is not discerned as dissonant to the Bulgarians, it is

⁴⁴ Kuteva, Maria. "*Predgovor.*" *in Durzhaven Ansambul za Narodni Pesni i Tantsi: I Svituk*. Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1958, 1-2

indeed to the western ear. In western music the major second is expected to resolve to the tonic, but in the Bulgarian folk music they simply float.⁴⁵ Figure 4.1 is an excerpt from Kyurkchiyski's *Bre Petrunko*. This is a perfect example of this type of dissonance. Note how trombones three and four move in parallel major seconds and on the downbeat of the fourth measure, there is a chord built on major seconds (C,D,E,F-sharp).

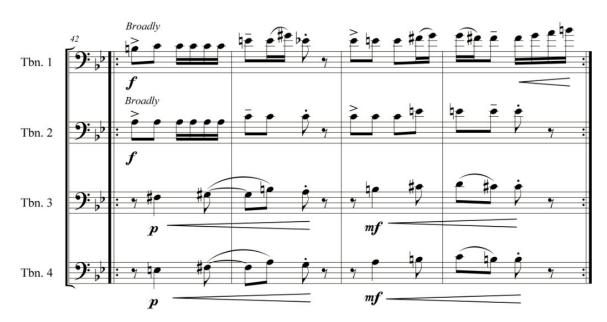


Figure 4.1 Example from the transcription of Kyurkchiyski's *Bre Petrunko* (Appendix F)

To help become more comfortable playing this interval with correct intonation, two different exercises are created. The first exercise separates the students into two groups. The group plays a whole tone scale in quarter notes with Group B starting one beat after Group A as shown in Figure 4.2. This

⁴⁵ Marshall, Ingram. liner notes. *Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares.* The Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir. Nonesuch 9 79165-2. CD,1987.

exercise is helpful because every interval is a major second diatonically and vertically. This not only helps students tune major seconds, but also exposes them to the whole tone scale. (The exercise based off of Figure 4.2 is located in Appendix U)



Figure 4.2 Tuning Major Seconds, Whole Tone Exercise

The second exercise consists of a five measure folk song (Figure 4.3) from the village of Nedelino located in the Rhodope Folk Region. The song is diaphonic and uses the interval of a major second between the voices. What makes this song so interesting is the voice crossing when the top voice is on the third and seventh scale degree. This functions nicely as a short etude when applying the tuning of major seconds learned from the previous exercise in Figure 4.2. In the created trombone etude (Appendix T), this song is used in its original key and then transposed it into three other keys offering a variety of tuning different pitches.



Figure 4.3 *My Lover is Going Out with Someone Else*. Nedelino Folk Song from Stajnov, Petko. *Izvestija na Instituta za muzika*. Sofija: Akad., 1952,188.

There is yet another aspect of Bulgarian folk music that is challenging to traditional western musical training. This is its use of asymmetrical or additive meters. Additive meter refers to a pattern of beats that subdivide into smaller, asymmetrical, often called "imperfect" groups. As an illustration, 5/8 can be produced as 3/8 + 2/8. This is opposed to symmetrical "divisive" meters which are produced by multiplying some integer unit into regular groupings forming beats of equal length.⁴⁶ For example, 2/4 is equal to 2 x 2/8. Another way to look at this is that additive rhythms are constructed and understood from the 'bottom up', while divisive rhythms are constructed and understood from the 'top down'.⁴⁷

Up until the twentieth century, virtually all western music was divided into divisive meters, that is, they are divided into twos or threes. An increased interest in eastern European folk music in the early twentieth century found composers

⁴⁶ London, Justin. "Rhythm." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45963pg1 (accessed February 23, 2012).

⁴⁷ London, Justin. "Rhythm." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45963pg1 (accessed February 23, 2012).

incorporating asymmetrical meters into their music.⁴⁸ One of the earliest composers influenced by native folk music was Bela Bartok. In Volume VI, No. 148-153 of his *Mikrokosmos* (progressive pieces for piano) there are six dances in Bulgarian rhythm. Another composer, Igor Stravinsky, used asymmetrical meters and rhythms in his ballets *Petrushka* and *Le sacre du printemps,* which became characteristics of much of his music.

Bela Bartok wrote, "If pupils studying music were to grow familiar with Bulgarian rhythm in childhood, it would not happen that qualified orchestral players would gape at much simpler rhythmic formulas than these, as if one had placed – at very least – Arabic writing before them."⁴⁹ Subdividing is essential when learning asymmetrical meters. Imperfect divisions of the beat are quite foreign to the western ear and sense of rhythm. This is a product of the fact that most of the music learned is written symmetrically. Symmetrical beat divisions make music extremely predictable and much simpler. This can contribute to students' apathy and cause them to approximate rhythms rather than subdivide them. In the absence of subdivision, asymmetrical meters cannot be precisely played. Bulgarian folk music can add even more challenges by having a large number of beats per measure. In two of the transcriptions the time signature is 11/16, conducted in five with a beat division of (2+2+3+2+2).

⁴⁸ Bartók, Béla, and Benjamin Suchoff. *Béla Bartók essays*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993,40.

⁴⁹ Bartók, Béla, and Benjamin Suchoff. *Béla Bartók essays*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 49.

A very effective ensemble exercise is to encourage the student to rely on his/her inner pulse and have the group practice these pieces without a conductor. Learning these Bulgarian pieces, the students will learn a greater importance of subdividing and then hopefully, use this knowledge to make it easier to execute rhythms in all aspects of their musical performance.

Conclusion

When a trombone teacher brings these Bulgarian transcriptions into the classroom it not only opens the student's mind to new music, but it also allows the student to gain specific skills, such as subdividing and rhythm, intonation and harmony, and ornamentation. These new ideas and skills in turn apply not just to specific techniques, but also develop the student's ear, as the dissonance common to these songs teaches students to put their western musical tastes into a global perspective. In teaching the same standard repertoire repeatedly, the instructor can run the risk of musically alienating students through boredom and lack of diversity. Studying and performing these folk transcriptions can enhance a collegiate trombone choir allowing them to become more open in their musical acceptance, more knowledgeable about world music traditions, and more musically diverse.

It would not be a surprising to learn that most students have little or no knowledge of Bulgaria, where it is, or the kind of influence it has had over the western world or pop culture. An example of this ignorance would be the theme song from *Xena: Warrior Princess.* The music begins with the Bulgarian bagpipe, a *gaida,* and then moves into a Bulgarian woman's chorus singing the asymmetrical song that is very similar to the transcription *Kaval Zviri* (Appendix B). More recently, the Bulgarian song *Zaidi, Zaidi Iasno Slantze* was used in the movie "*300*" during the death scene of Leonidas. In fact, Frank Zappa was influenced by an early recording of the Filip Kutev Ensemble from 1955 entitled

Music of Bulgaria, which was one of his favorite albums.⁵⁰ These transcriptions aid students and audiences in recognizing the importance and influence of Bulgaria's musical culture.

In addition to the benefits of playing in a trombone choir for students' overall technique, playing this type of music requires a heightened sense of intonation and rhythmic integrity. Bulgarian folk music brings diversity in rhythm and harmony that American students are not generally familiar with. Learning to hear and discern dissonances as Bulgarian folk singers do, as agreeable and pleasant, encourage students to step out of their musical comfort zone. Learning to play asymmetrical rhythms encourages students to raise their ensemble awareness. Learning to emulate the Bulgarian singers' ornamentation encourages the student to learn the style by listening to authentic recordings. The goal is then to have students transfer these skills to all aspects of their playing. Students could attain these same skills by playing atonal twentieth century music, however such skills are more easily learned through these Bulgarian folk transcriptions because they are more tonal and therefore more accessible.

Through these transcriptions, students will develop enhanced ensemble skills and an expanded understanding of the musical language of another culture.

⁵⁰ Miles, Barry. *Zappa*. New York: Grove Press, 2004,121.

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Appendix A



Ayde, Maro





Ayde, Maro



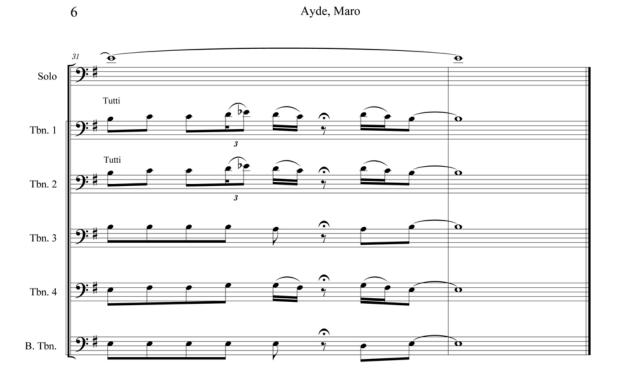






Ayde, Maro





Appendix B



























Polegnala	Εĩ	Гodora
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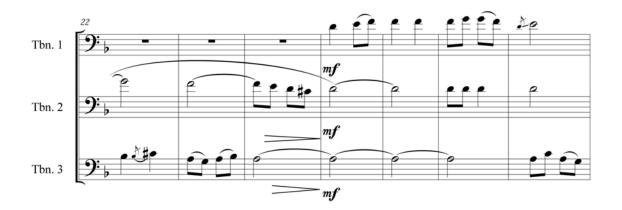




Appendix D





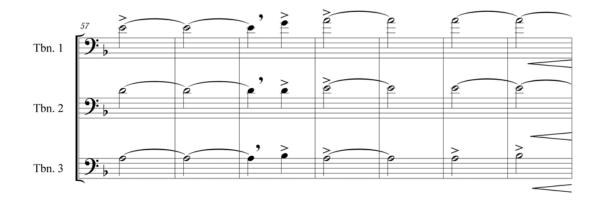






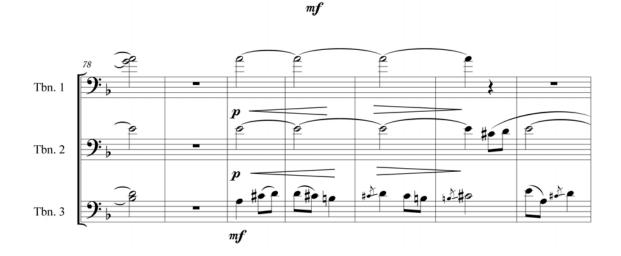


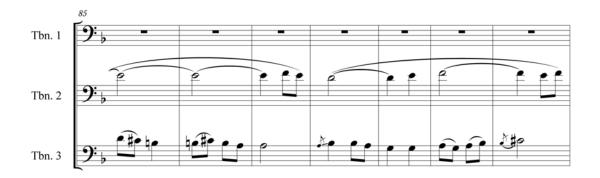












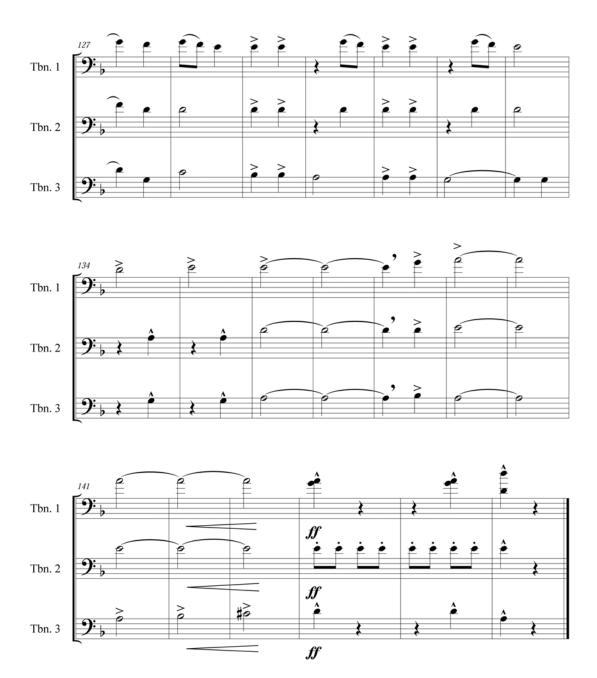






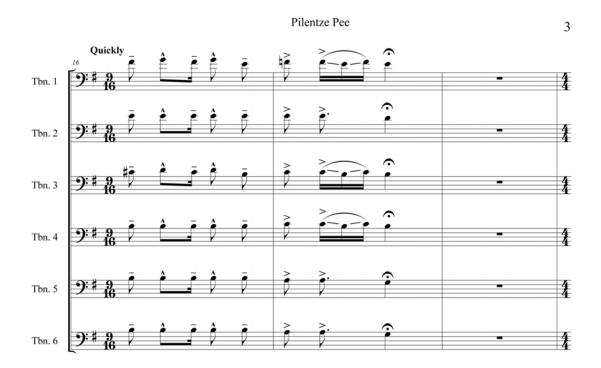


















Appendix F





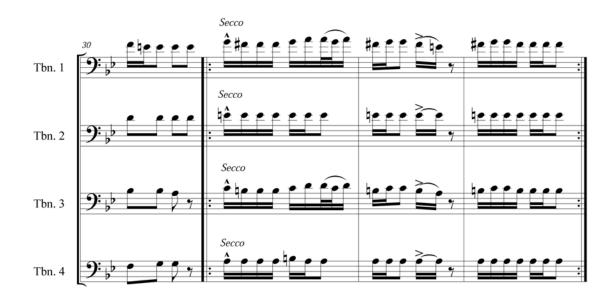
















Bre Petrunko















Dilmano, dilbero







Dilmano, dilbero







Appendix H



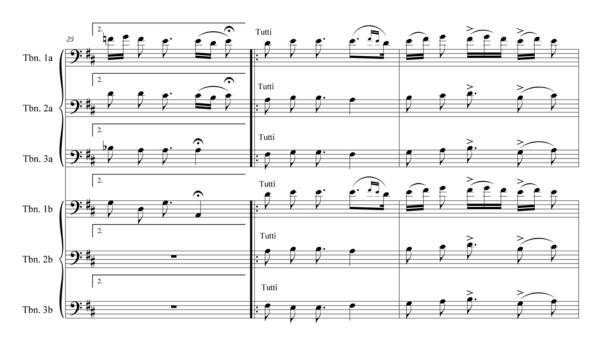
Dragana I Slaveya







Dragana I Slaveya





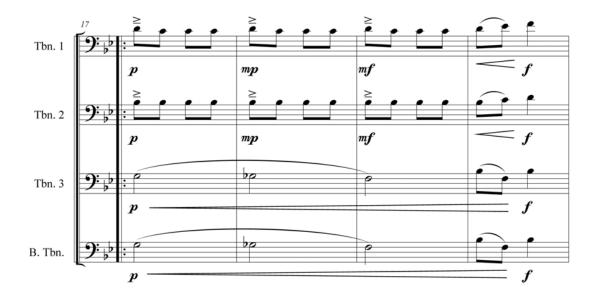
Appendix I





















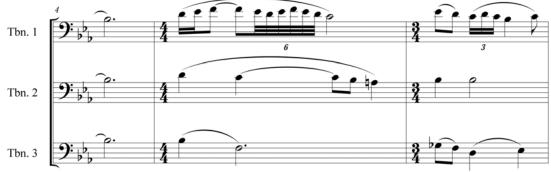
Appendix J



This song should be played twice. The first time starts off slowly and gradually gets faster. The second time should be played at a presto tempo.

Appendix K







Appendix L



Appendix M

Zdravitz Green Clover

Filip Kutev Trans. James Albrecht







Zdravitz



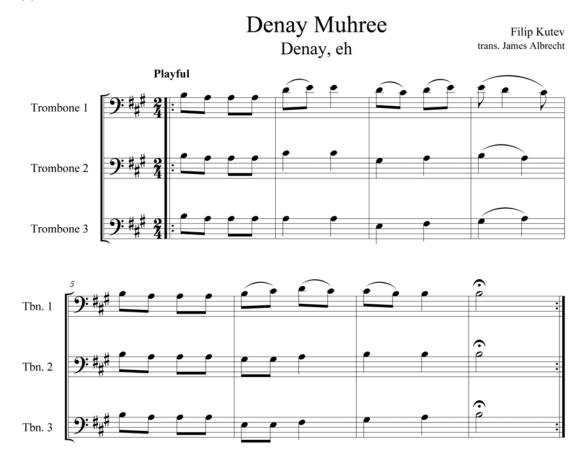




Appendix N



Appendix O



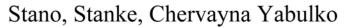
Appendix P

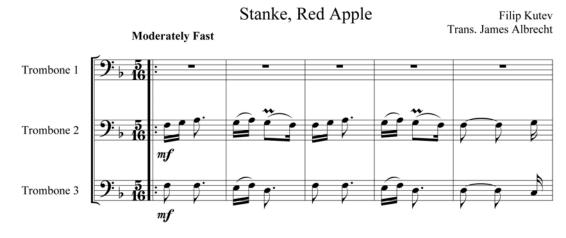


Appendix Q

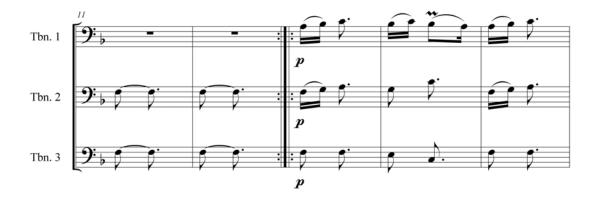


Appendix R



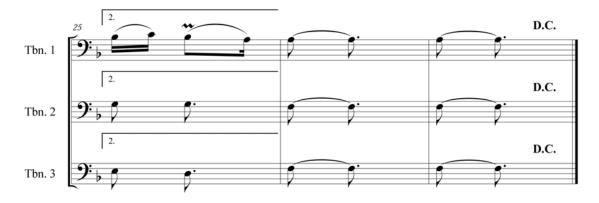












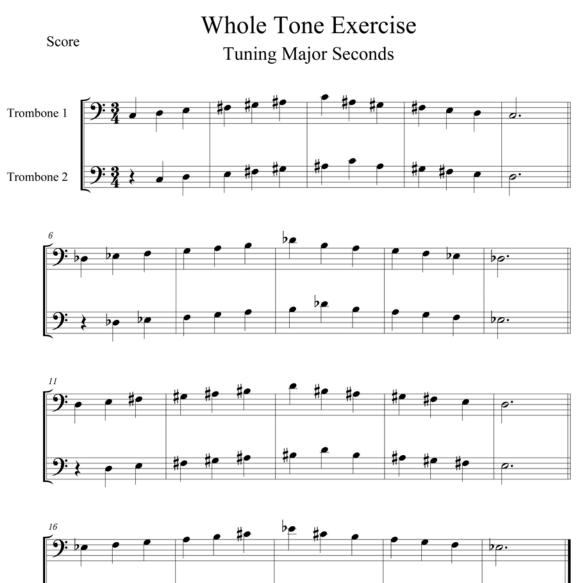


Appendix T



Major 2nd Tuning Exercise Based on a Folk Song from the Rhodope Region

Appendix U



b,