

RITUAL AND CUSTOMARY WEDDING SONGS IN RAKITOVICA (SLAVONSKA PODRAVINA)

SUMMARY

Songs which are obligatorily performed, or were obligatorily performed in earlier times, are singled out from the full musical repertoire associated with the complex of Rakitovica wedding events. These songs are connected with the ritual and customary context.

The rituality of certain songs is their most significant characteristic - *ritual songs* (nos. 1-8) are part of the closed, firmly structured ritual and customary whole. These songs are performed solely within that whole, at clearly defined moments during the unfolding of certain wedding ritual or custom, with exactly defined texts. Their importance for the human group in which they appear does not lie in the songs themselves — they are primarily a means for expressing certain values in culture. The ritual songs group is determined in relation to the manner of musical expression (exclusively vocal melodies) and the bearers of the songs (traditionally, these are young girls). Because of the firm links with weddings rituals and customs, differentiation should be made within the group of ritual songs between *songs accompanying the custom of weaving of the bridal wreath* (nos. 1-4) and *wedding-day songs* (nos. 5-8).

Customary songs (nos. 9-10) are performed in the ritual or customary context, but they are also encountered outside the complex of wedding events, on other occasions (family celebrations, local performances, get-togethers). For the human group they are intrinsic and interesting because of their musical and textual features, and as a means of fulfilling the need for entertainment and direct artistic communication between people. Therefore, it is understandable that customary songs are accepted and performed with more spontaneity and freedom than ritual songs, and that they are characterised by variety in the manner of their musical expression (vocal and vocal/instrumental forms), and variety in their bearers (the younger and the older generation, women and men). *Partly customary songs* are those which are performed in the ritual or customary context at some weddings today, but which are performed rarely (no. 11).

Ritual and customary wedding songs in Rakitovica are considered in relation to musical content and forms noted mainly in the Slavonian region, which correspond to them in tune, text and/or manner of usage.

Three songs are analysed in detail: one ritual song accompanying the custom of weaving of the bridal wreath (no. 2), one ritual wedding-day song (no. 8), and one customary song (no. 10). Particular attention is paid to the way of life of the musical folklore phenomena - to characteristics of variation, the role of individuals in the process of continuity and changes, the relation between the vocal and instrumental media, the influence

of certain patterns of behaviour on musical practice, and the connection between the manner of usage of certain groups of songs with their joint musical characteristics.

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)