

Ivan Ivančan

FOLK DANCES FROM THE SURROUNDINGS OF DONJA STUBICA IN
HRVATSKO ZAGORJE

S u m m a r y

No information can be found about folk dances from the surroundings of Stubica in the northern Croatian region of Hrvatsko Zagorje in the available literature or in the folk dance material recorded so far, and the present author could therefore rely only on the results of his own field investigations undertaken on several occasions in the course of 1970 and 1971.

Many of the dances recorded on these occasions have variants which are found in the neighbouring regions of Croatia and in Slovenia, since the ethnochoreographic features of Stubica and its surroundings are those of the Alpine zone of folk dancing.

The occasions on which dancing is mostly done are church festivals and fairs, then various events in connection with Christmas and Easter, and particularly the Carnival. In former times, dancing was traditionally done around bonfires on St. George's Day, on Midsummer Day and Easter. St. George's bonfire dances were particularly popular. Dancing was regularly accompanied by singing.

Various types of orchestra were known in this part of Hrvatsko Zagorje which provided music for dancing. First, they were mainly string (violin) groups (sometimes supplemented by a flute or a *tambura*; later *tambura* orchestras became the dominant type.

Dancing was an important part of various folk customs, particularly those connected with weddings. One of the highlights of every wedding party was the so-called dawn dance. A bonfire was made in the backyard early in the morning and all the guests came out of the house to dance a reel round it and give money to the newlyweds. Masked dancers danced their own dance on that occasion. In the surroundings of Stubica, like in many other parts of Croatia, there is a special dance for the bride to demonstrate that she does not limp. In some villages dancing is done for the ceremonial decorations worn by the members of the wedding party, and on that occasion again money donations are made for the young couple.

Some of the carnival dances still preserve traces of earlier ritual dancing to ensure good beet crop. Dancers jump in the air and accompany their dancing with certain words or exclamations.

Compared with earlier dancing, modern dancing is characterized by changes in style and tempo.

(Translated by *Vlado Ivir*)