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Author's **ABSTRACT**
of
PhD Thesis
on topic:

“The Troubadours and the Contemporary Bard Culture”

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Sofia, Bulgaria

2023

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In the last decades of the past 20th century and the beginning of our 21st century, the profession of troubadour became increasingly popular. A musician who sings songs and simultaneously accompanies himself on a guitar, while, depending on the situation, speaking and entertaining the audience.

For more than a millennium, this profession has existed in various forms and, although evolving and changing its appearance and techniques, has managed to preserve and enrich much of its beauty and soulfulness. Similarly, even earlier, bards gave the profession its name and the term “bard” - a poet who does not necessarily include musical accompaniment to his verse. This study examines various aspects of the past, historical development and role of the troubadour (or related professions) in their respective eras. The study introduces the reader to the most prominent members of these trades and the contributions they have made to world culture.

The **topicality and motivation** for examining the topic “The Troubadours and the Contemporary Bard-Culture” arises from the fact that over the last hundred years the terms “bard” and “troubadour” have been used rather casually – almost as synonyms, which sometimes sounds confusing to the general public.

The **aim** of this dissertation is to provide a broader historical overview of all the professions and representatives associated with bards and troubadours. This overview alone will illuminate the subject and bring greater clarity to the matter. It will trace the relationship and point out the similarities between ancient, medieval, and modern representatives of poetic-musical creativity.

The biographies, working methods, and contributions of the most significant representatives of the poetic-musical traditions during the different time periods in the respective ethnic areas, kingdoms, empires, and countries will be the **subject** of this dissertation.

The **methodology** of the dissertation involves the presentation of information gathered and translated from a very large number of sources, followed by an analysis of the contribution of the object presented to world culture (including contemporary bard culture). In addition to Bulgarian, sources in English, Russian, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish and Serbo-Croatian, translated by the PhD student, are used.

The **tasks** of the dissertation include

1. Arranging and presenting all the known poetic-musical styles that inhabited Europe (and later - America) from antiquity to the present and introducing their most significant figures.
2. An analysis of the contribution of the styles to world culture and their (possible) contribution to contemporary bard-culture.
3. Compiling a table reflecting the periods and places of existence and activity of the respective poetic-musical collectives.
4. Clarifying the contemporary meaning and usage of the terms “bard” and “troubadour”.

The **structure** of the dissertation is in accordance with the sequence of the set tasks.

Chapter I introduces the predecessors of the troubadours: bards and philid, scopes and skalds, who lived and worked in ancient Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England and Scandinavia respectively.

Chapter II describes the actual troubadours who appeared in the late 11th – early 12th century in the lands of ancient Occitania and lasted for two and a half centuries. The main styles and genres of their work are mentioned, as well as their relation to Bulgarian history.

Chapter III is devoted to the contemporaries and followers of the troubadours from northern France, the lands of the Holy Roman Empire and the Anglo-Saxon lands: the trouvères, minstrels, jongleurs, vagantes and goliards. At the end of Chapter III, a table has been created showing the historical positioning of the various orders of bards, troubadours, etc., from antiquity to the twentieth century.

Chapter IV identifies the most significant “troubadours” of our time: the singer-poets who performed their own songs and who left the most vivid mark on the cultural history of the twentieth and the already begun twenty-first century. Beginning with the great names of North American poetic-song culture who have inspired their European counterparts to a great extent, some of the greatest creators of South American “engaged” song follow. The study also introduces a reader to the most significant “contemporary troubadours” from the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Russia, and the former Soviet Union. It then goes on to present notable names of contemporary troubadours from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and (naturally) some of the most prominent Bulgarian authors.

By presenting the history and the different varieties of the troubadour profession, light is shed and a clearer explanation is given of the nature of the terms “troubadour” and “bard” in modern life.

HISTORICAL FACTS.

PREDECESSORS OF THE TROUBADOURS AND SOME OF THEIR MORE SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATIVES

From the earliest times, music and chants have been one of the most vivid and direct ways of communication between people. By expressing people's thoughts and emotions in sound form, music was (and remains to this day) a powerful means of communicating and influencing people's psyches. The combination of instrumental music combined with vocals has directly conveyed artistic or even specific messages from the performer (or performers) to the audience.

In the period of the decomposition of the primitive-communal system, when the syncretic complex of primitive art gradually began to disintegrate, music as an independent art form emerged. With the development of the division of labor and the emergence of different social classes, the originally homogeneous musical culture belonging to the whole society was divided into the culture of the dominant classes and the culture of the people, as well as into professional and non-professional culture. At this time, the independent existence of musical folklore as a popular non-professional art took shape. The musical creativity of the popular masses built the foundation of the musical culture of society as a whole, and constituted the richest source of images and means of expression for professional composers.

The musical culture of the slave-holding and early feudal states of the Old World (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, India, China, Greece, Rome, Central Asia) is already characterized by the extensive activity of professional musicians (usually combining both composer and performer) who serve in temples and palaces, participate in ritual ceremonies, public festivals, etc. And although music retains the practical, material and spiritual functions inherited from primitive society and the immediate involvement in the labour process, domestic life, military life, civil

and cultural rites, etc., there is a distinct aesthetic function, and the first musical examples intended only for listening appear (for example, chants and musical pieces performed in ancient Greece at competitions between musicians). Various song (epic and lyric) and dance genres developed, in many of which poetry, song and dance retained their original unity. Music played a major role in theatrical performances, particularly in ancient Greek tragedies (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, were not only playwrights, but also musicians). A variety of musical instruments (including the harp, lyre, and ancient wind and percussion instruments) were perfected and acquired a stable form and structure. The first systems for recording music (cuneiform, hieroglyphic, neumatic and alphabetic) also appeared, although the primary form for its preservation and dissemination remained oral. The first musical aesthetic and theoretical doctrines and systems also emerged. Many ancient philosophers wrote about music (in China - Confucius, in Greece - Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, in Rome - Lucretius Carus). The ancient Greeks developed theories about the relationship of music to mathematics, believing that the logic of music could give them the key to unlocking the mysteries of the universe. Music was accepted in practice and in theory as a type of activity akin to science, craftsmanship and religious cult, as a “projection” of the world, facilitating knowledge of its laws and as the most powerful means of influencing nature (magic) and man (building civic qualities, moral education, healing, etc.). The most ancient performers of epic poetry in ancient Greece were called **aidoi** (singular: **aidos** - in ancient Greek αἰδός / aídós, from the verb ᾄδω / áidō, singer). They perform songs inspired by the Greek epic, accompanied by lyre or sitar. The aidoi create their own poetry and songs. Homer himself is considered the most famous of them. Another famous aidos is the celebrated singer and music teacher Terpander (712-645 BC). A little later, the so-called **rhapsodes** (from Greek: ῥαψῳδός, rhapsōdos) appeared. In contrast to the aidoi, they were rather professional performers of already established poetry, but there were exceptions, such as the ancient Greek poet Hesiod (8th-7th century BC) and later Pindar (c. 522-443 BC). The latter was one of the nine canonized poets of ancient Greece who wrote and performed poems dedicated to the gods, to the heroes of the works of Homer and Hesiod, to Alexander the Great, and to the heroes of the Olympic Games.

During the Middle Ages in Europe a new type of musical culture was gradually created - feudal, combining professional art, amateur musicianship and folklore. And since the church at that time dominated all areas of spiritual life, the basis of professional musical art was the activity of musicians in temples and monasteries. The secular professional art, on the other hand, was mainly represented by singers creating and performing epic tales (sagas, legends and fairy tales) in the palaces, in the homes of the nobility, among the military, etc. These were the bards in Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England; the filid in Ireland and Scotland, the scop in Anglo-Saxon England, the skalds in Norway and Iceland. Towards the end of the eleventh century troubadours appeared in the lands of Occitania (present-day southern France, Monaco, Catalonia and parts of north-west Italy). Before discussing their activities in more detail, let us consider the activities of some of their predecessors - *bards*, *filid*, *scops* and *skalds*.

1.1. Bards

A bard is a Celtic poet who is most often also a musician. The etymology of the term “bard” comes from antiquity: (Sanskrit: *bardait* - singer-performer of praises, Old Celtic: *bardo*). The ancient Greek scholar Posidonius (135 – 51 BC) first wrote about bards in the

ancient lands of Gaul¹. After the colonization of the British Isles by the Celts (which began before the New Age and continued until the Middle Ages), bardic activity developed most strongly there - in the lands of present-day Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall (southwest England). In the mid-first century AD, the Roman poet Marcus Aeneas Lucan identified the bards as the national poets of Gaul and Britain. Bards were itinerant poets, but they were also very often appointed as courtiers to local kings, princes and nobles, playing a *crwth*² or a harp and performing in song form praises of their patrons, their ancestors, and their great deeds, battles and victories. Their distinctive epic represents a significant proportion of the Celtic cultural heritage. Beginning in the early first millennium AD, it has continued to exist for almost 15 centuries. Alongside the ancient prose sagas of the tenth century, in addition to plots having a mainly heroic content, song-ballads of high poetic lyrics and quality also arose. The repertoire of the bards also included martial, religious and satirical songs, elegies, etc. The bards were the guardians of tribal memory.

Although there is no surviving music from the songs of the bards, one can judge its character from the poetic features of the songs, and especially from the characteristic musical details carried over into the folk song. The art of the bards had a significant influence on the development of national poetic creativity. During some periods of the Middle Ages, bards were subjected to persecution by the authorities. For example, under Queen Elizabeth I reign, for inciting the Irish to rebel against England, many bards were sentenced to death. However, over time, especially during the Romantic era, the term “bard” became a byword for a poet and in particular: a famous poet. William Shakespeare, for example, is often referred to as “The Immortal Bard”. Nowadays this rule remains and many of the greatest poets (especially those singing and accompanying their songs on guitar) are also called bards. Such are Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, John Lennon, Joan Baez, Vladimir Vysotsky and many others. But we will talk about them later. But let us now return to the medieval bards and consider in turn the bards of the Celtic peoples and in particular - the Irish, Scottish and Welsh bards.

1.1.1. Irish bards

In medieval Celtic society in Ireland and Scotland, the professional men of science were organized into a court system comprising four groups: druids (*draoi*), filid (sing.: fili), judges (*breitheamh*), and historian-antiquaries (*seanchaidh*). The Irish bards occupied a lower position in the hierarchy. They are one of the two groups of respected poets in Ireland. The other group are the filid, whom we shall consider a little later. According to the text of medieval Irish law (Uraicecht Becc), bards were considered a lower class of poets who could not be elected to high poetic positions reserved only for the filid. This gradation and division is believed to have been created by the Irish Church, as the filid were much more closely associated with it.

However, Irish bards make up a professional body of highly trained and experienced poets. As servants in royal and noble palaces, bards performed a number of official functions. They were both chroniclers and satirists whose activities ranged from praising their patrons and employers to ridiculing and reviling their opponents. Bards were educated in special schools, the existence of which continued until the middle of the seventeenth century in Ireland and until the early eighteenth century in Scotland. The bards themselves were also divided into two categories: honorary bards (*soebairds*) and common bards (*doebairds*) which categories were

¹ *Gaul* - The Roman name for a vast area in western Europe, including present-day France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, as well as parts of Switzerland, Germany and northern Italy.

² *Crwth* - a musical instrument similar to the lyre which was originally played only with the fingers, and later also with the bow.

divided into subcategories. Presumably this “categorisation” was closely related to the background and level of education of the poet concerned. According to the English philosopher, historian and writer John Aubrey (1626 – 1697), the bards had three categories in total. It is interesting to note that although they were subordinate to the filid, after the Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century the patronage of the filid gradually declined, eventually leading to their extinction, while the bardic class continued to exist until the seventeenth century, and in Scotland - until the mid-eighteenth century.

1.1.2 Scottish Bards

It is interesting to note that the bardic tradition was carried over from Ireland to Scotland. There the poetry was practised not in the strict metres of the classical Gaelic language, but in the dialectal and irregular metres of the native Scottish Gaelic. Unlike their Irish counterparts, Scottish bards were not always so educated. This was also due to the fact that the bardic tradition was mostly preserved in the highland areas of the country, far from the major cultural centres. The last known member of the clan to practise classical Gaelic poetry was **Domhnall Mac Muirick**, who worked in the 18th century. In Scotland, the great poet **Robert Burns** (1759 – 1796) is regarded as the undisputed national bard.

1.1.3. Welsh bards

Medieval Welsh literature mentions a number of mythical bards, the most famous of whom are **Aneirin** and **Taliesin**, who lived in the 6th-7th centuries. Information about them can be found in the “Red Book of Hergest“, the “White Book of Rhydderch“, as well as from books dedicated to them themselves (“The Book of Aneirin“ and “The Book of Taliesin“). There is not much extant information about the early medieval period in Wales, but the artifacts of the later centuries of the medieval period in Wales become the main source and core of “The Matter of Britain” mythology, also called “Arthuriana” or “The Arthurian Cycle” because of its main theme: the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. The Laws of *Hywel Dda* (Howel of God), created in Wales around AD 900, defines the bards as members of the Royal Household. One of their tasks was the exaltation of the Supreme British Authority, thanks to which information on the lineage of the highest-ranking British Knights has been preserved to this day. The law also specifies the instrument the bards will use: the harp, or crook. Twelfth-century manuscripts record the designation, as early as the tenth century, of two categories of bards: the bard: “*teulu*” and the “*pencerdd*” – the head of the fraternity of bards in the area. According to the Welsh poet Thomas Gwynn Jones (1871 – 1949), these brotherhoods lasted until the end of the 19th century.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the royal courts phased out the appointment of court bards. However, this led to an increase in their numbers, and, following the example of the Occitan troubadours, a number of Welsh princes became bards themselves.

Due to the growing influence in Cornwall and Wales of the English monarchs towards the end of the 13th century, the songs of the bards inciting free thinking were described as revolutionary songs. This led to the creation of a number of laws restricting their activities. After the conquest of Wales by Edward I and later the reign of Elizabeth I, attitudes towards bards became very negative. They were called ridiculous and mimes and their reputation fell to a very low level.

Nevertheless, the bardic traditions of the early Middle Ages in Wales continued into the fourteenth century through the work of **Dafyd ap Gwilym** and **Iolo Goch**, and even - to the present day through the so-called Gorsedd of Bards of Wales (Gorsedd Cymru).

As can be seen, the term “bard” appeared even before the beginning of the new era. This term in various aspects continues to be used today. Naturally, the first bards had a completely different way of functioning and expressing themselves compared to their modern counterparts. Rather, they continued the tradition of the ancient Greek aoidoi and rhapsodes. The bards of late antiquity and the Middle Ages had a close relationship with the influential caste of the filid.

1.2. Filid

The Filid were members of an elite class of poets in old Ireland who existed until the advent of the Renaissance, when the Irish class system gradually disintegrated. The etymology of the word derives from the Old Gaelic word *widluios*, defining the concept of one who sees into the future, a prophet. According to *A Textbook of Irish Literature*, by Eleanor Hull (1906), the filid originally functioned the same time as magicians, lawgivers, judges, advisers to the ruler, and poets. Over time, some of their functions fell away and their activities were mainly limited to being poets, musicians and philosophers. In his studies, John Aubrey argues that the filid occupied the fourth highest rank in the hierarchy of bards. Bards, unlike filid, did not have to adhere particularly strictly to the traditions and principles of verse writing. They could also work for the filid by performing their works. There is some dispute about who was the first fili. The two claimants to this fame are **Amergin** (a Milesian who is said to have sung the first song) and **Fénius Farsaid** (the founder of the first school of filid).

In the filid society, there was an internally cooperative hierarchy comprising seven grades (arranged in ascending order of importance: ollam, ansruth, cli, cano, dos(s), mac fuirmid, focluc), with each higher-ranking fili having the right to perform repertoire broader in range and more important (according to accepted norms) than that of the lower-ranking fili. Each is trained for 12 years. The filid were included among the nobility, along with bishops and princes.

1.3. Scops

The scops were the poets of Old England. Unlike the bards, their connection with the local noble courts was not always so pronounced. They were itinerant storyteller-reciters, keepers of the genealogy and historical memory of the Anglo-Saxon ethnos. Like the bards, they accompanied their recitations with the crwth or lyre. Much of their repertoire, apart from eulogies of their contemporary patrons, consists of retellings of old stories and legends which range from the religious and the epic - to the comic. It is assumed that the few preserved “author's” works of scops are actually a compilation and overlay of stories by several different authors. The most famous epic poem of this time is “Beowulf”. Another remarkable work is “The Dream of the Cross” (“The Dream of the Rood”) It is one of the oldest and, at the same time, one of the most remarkable poems in Anglo-Saxon literature. It is preserved in the tenth-century Vercelli collection, but was probably written as early as the seventh century. It is not known with certainty who the author was, but it has been suggested that it was one of the two scops **Caedmon** or **Cuneulf**. Another old English poem that has come down to us is the “Wanderer's Song” (“Widsith”) (dating from c. 7th century AD) giving an insight into the activities and life of the scopes. However, it has to be said that unfortunately there are very few surviving artifacts about the scopes and their work.

It should be noted that at that time in the northern parts of present-day Germany there were poets with an almost identical name: scopfs.

1.4. Scalds

The Skalds (Norse: skald – poet, singer) were Norwegian and Icelandic poets, reciters and storytellers who existed in the Nordic countries during the 9th-13th centuries. They played an important role in the musical and social life of medieval Scandinavia and Iceland, and held a high position in the entourage of kings and viking chieftains. Their activity consisted in singing in poetry, and in recording and retelling stories of the victories and exploits of their patrons and of other heroes. Skalds were not only witnesses of the events they chant. Unlike bards and scopfs, the skalds were very often warriors as well as poets, and active participants in historical events. Their work was highly valued, and the best skalds enjoyed wide popularity, being richly rewarded. The Norwegian king Harald Horfagre (850 – 932) even made his entourage a kind of centre for the creation of skaldic poetry. From the Viking sagas of this period, more than 250 skalds are known to have existed. Most of the skalds did not record their poems. They told them live or sang them in public. Much of the surviving written artifacts are actually interpretations of orally transmitted skaldic poetry. The musical aspect of their work is considerably less studied than the poetic. Leading in their art was the song genre. There is no certain evidence that the skalds used musical instruments, but there are claims that some of them accompanied their performances on a harp or lyre. There are two strands in Skaldic poetry: panegyric, praising the deeds of kings, nobles and heroes; and also (though less developed) blasphemous, criticising adversaries and enemies. Their work reflects both their contemporary reality and the historical past of the Scandinavian peoples.

Evidence of Scaldic poetry can be traced as far back as the late eighth century. Among the most famous skalds we can mention:

Bragi Bodasson (early 9th century) – a Norse skald, author of the “Ragnardrapa” – served under several Swedish kings who ruled in the first half of the 9th century.

Thorbjørn Hornkløve (late 9th century) – Norwegian skald, author of the “Glimdrapa”, a eulogy dedicated to King Harald Horfagre. It is the oldest known skaldic ode describing the lifetime achievements of a Norse ruler.

Tjodolv of Hvin (c. 900) – a Norse skald, author of the poem “Ynglingatal”, praising the Norse king Ragnvald Heydumhere (the highly honoured) and describing his descent from the Swedish kings and Norse gods.

Egil Skalagrimsson (c. 910-990) – Icelandic skald, warrior and landowner.

Ulv Ugesson (late 10th century) – Icelandic skald who wrote “Husdrapa”.

Sigvat Thordsson (c. 995-1045) – Icelandic skald, served under King Olav II Haraldsson of Norway (the Holy).

King Harald III Hardrode (The hard ruler) – (King of Norway from 1046 to 1066)

Arnor Thordsson Jarlaskald – (c. 1012-1075) – a hereditary Icelandic skald who served successively under King Magnus Olavsson the Good of Norway and King Knut II (the Mighty) of Denmark. Considered one of the most important skalds of the 11th century.

Einarr Skúlason (12th century) – Icelandic skald who served under the Norwegian kings Sigurd Magnusson (The Crusader), Harald IV Gille and his son Eystein (Øystein)

Haraldsson. His most famous work is “Geisli” – “Sunshine” - BC, dedicated to the Norwegian king Olav II (The Holy).

Snorri Sturluson (1179 – 1241) – Icelandic historian, skald and politician. Author of the monumental work “The Prosaic Eda” (also called in Icelandic “Snorri’s Eda” or “The Younger Eda”). “The Prosaic Eda” introduces us to Norse mythology and uses quotations from famous skaldic poems, the section called “Skaldskaparmol” introduces us to the technique and styles of skaldic poetry. “The Heimskringla” (a collection of royal sagas) is an extremely valuable document of the history of the Norwegian kings. More than 700 manuscripts of scaldic poetry containing over 5,500 verses have survived.

As a summary, we can say that the first bards appeared at least around 150 B.C. Their existence and activity were connected with both the palace circles and religious societies. They were the forerunners and pioneers of the other representatives of poetic-musical creativity that followed them in Europe, such as the filid, the scopes, the skalds, and later the troubadours, the trouvères, the minnesingers, the minstrels, and the goliards. The name “bard” remains relevant to this day, with only part of the term's meaning evolving to its contemporary meaning which will be defined at the end of the study.

Chapter II

TROUBADOURS. REPRESENTATIVES AND GENRES

2.1. Origin and character of the work of the troubadours

With the advent of the developed Middle Ages (1100 – 1350), poet-singers, usually accompanying their works on a musical instrument, called **troubadours**, first appeared in the lands of Occitania. Although they lasted as such only until the early 14th century, they played an important role in the development of poetry and certain musical genres in the Middle Ages and later in the Renaissance and Romantic periods, right up to the present day.

The term “troubadour“ comes to us through Occitan (*trobador*) and French (*troubadour*) . In most Latin languages it is almost identical, differing mainly in the way it is pronounced (trobador in Provençal and Catalan; trovador in Spanish, Galician and Portuguese; trovatore in Italian). Only the German term “minnesinger“ is distinct, as it derives from the old high German “minnesang“, meaning love song. The most popular theory on the etymology of the term “troubadour” is that it comes from the Provençal verb “trobar“, which is closest in meaning to the modern verb “create“. According to the Oxford Dictionary of English Etymologies, the Provençal “trobar“ and the old french “trover“ (and hence the derived nouns *troveor*, *trovere* and *trouvere*), mean “compose“, and in more recent times “invent“. According to another hypothesis, the word troubadour derives from *troupe* (anc. Greek: *τρόπος*, *tropos* – “transition, metaphor“ or Latin (*con*)-*tropare* – “compose tropes“). There are other theories about the origin of the term trobador, such as the so-called “Spanish-Arabic” theory, according to which it derives from the Arabic word “tarab” (music, song). In his book “The World of the Troubadours” („Светът на трубадурите“), the Bulgarian scholar of troubadour poetry Simeon Hadzhikosev points out, “If the term trobar really means 'to invent, to compose, to invent', the full formula for what today we would describe as poetic art is trobar e cantar, that is, to invent and to sing.“

The Troubadours of Occitania produced for the first time in European culture a lyric in the spoken vernacular that was distinctly secular in character. This lyric is also closely linked to the establishment of the so-called “Courtly ideal” in the 12th century, associated with the new courtly-aristocratic culture and the cult of the lady of the heart. Love lyrics are central to the work of the troubadours, but themes of various feudal feuds and the Crusades, in which many of the troubadours took part, were also common. The troubadours were also the first representatives of secular art to possess musical literacy. 264 songs containing sheet music have survived. The tradition of direct performance through the singing of the texts underlies their work. Troubadours usually performed their own songs (often accompanied by minstrels), or commissioned jogleurs to work under them. To accompany their songs, troubadours use the viola, harp, zither and other musical instruments.

Although most of the troubadours come from noble circles, there is an extremely wide spectrum of their social affiliation, which ranges from crowned royalty to common villeins (i.e., artisan bourgeois). Although troubadour creativity and performances were mostly cultivated in feudal castles, their songs performed by minstrels, or itinerant jugglers, were also heard in town squares and country houses, further contributing to the spread of this culture.

The poetry of the troubadours is closely linked to the knight’s castle. The biographies of various troubadours often mention their noble patrons - famous feudal lords. The troubadours themselves, in their verses, often mention the kindnesses or injustices inflicted on them by their patrons, praising their generosity or condemning their avarice. Many palaces and castles belonging to noble lovers of poetry in Provence, Italy and Spain became centres of poetic art. Such centres existed, for example, in the palaces of the Count of Toulouse, the Viscounts of Marseilles, the Dauphin of Vienne, the Kings of Aragon and Castile in Spain, the Margrave of Monferrat in Italy, and under the Italian Emperor Frederick II. Many troubadours (including famous poets such as Bernard de Ventadorn, Arnaut Daniel, and Pierre Vidal) lived in the palaces of famous patrons as their court poets. Others lived the life of itinerant singers, like minstrels and jogleurs. The art of the Occitan troubadours had a significant influence on the emergence and development of the troubadours in northern France, as well as the German-Austrian minnesingers in Alsace and Lorraine. Although less frequent among the troubadours, female troubadours, the so-called trobadoritz, or trobairitz (Occ. pron.: [truβaj'rits]), were also found. We should note here that in some Slavic countries such as Serbia and Croatia the term “troubadouritsa” is used for them today, which does not sound very good in Bulgarian, so we will use the term “lady-trobador”.

2.2. Representatives

The first known troubadour was **Guillaume de Poitiers / Guilhèm VII de Peitieu** (22.10.1071 – 10.02.1126), also known as **Guillaume IX, Duke of Aquitaine and Gascony** and **Count of Poitiers**. He was also called **Guillaume IX le Troubadour** (Guilhem IX le Troubadour). Considered as the progenitor not only of Provençal but also of European poetry. Eleven of his poems, written in Occitan (langue d’oc), have come down to us.

Bernart de Ventadorn, later known as **Bernard de Ventadour** (c. 1130 – 1195) is considered the most intelligible and sophisticated troubadour of the 12th century, with an excellent command of poetic expression. Of his forty-four extant poems, eighteen have extant musical texts. His work inspired and contributed to the development of the art of the troubadours in northern France.

Jaufre Rudel Prince de Blaia (c.1100 – 1148) was also one of the first Provençal troubadours. Seven of his cançons survive, four of them with music. He is known for having established the motif of “love from afar” (*amor de lonh* or *amour de loin*) in his songs.

Marcabru or **Marcabrun** (born in the first half of the 12th century) is considered the creator of the so-called “dark style” (*trobar clus*), which won many admirers, but due to its complexity gradually disappeared by the beginning of the 13th century. His poetry does not resemble that of other troubadours. He does not praise the courteous love, but sneers at the falsity of it. Marcabru admires true love (*bonamors*, *finaamors*) and extols it. According to prof. Simeon Hadzhikosev, he is the first troubadour who tries to distinguish “true love“ from “false love“ (*falsaamors*). Four monophonic melodies to Marcabru's verses have come down to us.

Count Raimbaut d’Aurenga (c. 1140 – 1174), or as he is also called **Raimbaut of Orange**, was born sometime between 1140 and 1145 and died young in 1174. One of the important troubadours of the 12th century, he contributed to the creation of the refined style (*trobar ric*), combining the best of the dark and of the light (occ. *trobar leu*) styles. Some 40 of his songs have survived.

Alfonso II of Aragon (1157 – 1196) - King of Aragon, Count of Barcelona and Count of Provence between 1164 and 1196. He is also called **Alfonso the Troubadour** (Spanish: Alfonso el Trovador), and **Alfonso II the Chaste** (Spanish: Alfonso el Casto). A great connoisseur of poetry and patron of troubadours, he was himself a respected poet and was close friends with another king and poet, Richard the Lionheart, as well as with the celebrated troubadour Bertrand de Born. Only one song (*tenso*) of Alfonso II has come down to us.

Guiraut de Bornelh (1138 – 1215) was one of the most gifted troubadours of the classical era. He is considered the founder of the *light style*. Guiraut de Bornelh earned for himself the nickname “master of the troubadours” (*maestre del trobadors*). Some eighty of his poems and four of his melodies have survived.

Peire d’Alvernhe (c.1130 – 1190) was a troubadour from Auvergne (active 1149 – 1170). According to various sources, twenty-one or twenty-four of his songs survive. He wrote in the “esoteric” and complex dark style (*trobar clus*). He is also famous for being the first troubadour mentioned by name in Dante’s “Divine Comedy”. Most of P. d’Alvernia’s works are cansos (Old Occ. [kan'su]). He also composed a so-called “devotional song” (pious song) and wrote six poems engaging with themes of religion, piety and spirituality. Peire d’Alvergne was also the first and only troubadour to use the term “*courteous love*” in his work. Unfortunately, the music of only two of the troubadour’s works survived until today.

Folquet de Marseille (Occ. Folquet de Marselha) (c. 1150 – 1231) is best known for his love songs (appreciated later also by Dante Alighieri, who dedicated several *tercets* to him in his Divine Comedy). Fourteen cansos, one lament, three crusading songs and one tenso have come down to us from Folquet de Marseille. He earned a notoriety as one of the leaders of the of the Albigensian crusade against his own countrymen, the Albigensians. He was also one of the founders of the University of Toulouse.

Gaucelm Faidit (c. 1160 – c. 1220) was one of the most prolific and famous troubadours of his time. Some seventy of his poems and fourteen of the melodies to them have survived. One of his most famous works is a lament dedicated to the death of King Richard the Lionheart, to whom Faidit sang in his lifetime.

Peire Vidal (1175 – 1205) was born in Toulouse. He was known for his exceptional singing ability, his extraordinary musicality and his eccentric character. Forty-five of his works

have survived to this day. Those twelve of them on which the melody has been preserved prove his musical talent.

Arnaut Daniel (c. 1155 – 1210) was an Aquitanian troubadour hailed by Dante as a great poet and by Petrarch as “the great maestro of love” (*granmaestro d'amore*). His poetry is sophisticated and innovative, the pinnacle of the “dark style”. Daniel was the first troubadour to write his works in the form of *sestinas*³, later used in the works of Dante and Petrarch. Only six texts by Arnaut Daniel have come down to us. The music to only one of them has survived.

Guillaume de Berguedan, (Occ. Guillem de Berguedà) (c. 1130 – 1195/6), was the most prolific Catalan troubadour of the 12th century, although he wrote in Occitan. Thirty-one of his poems have come down to the present day. Most of them are sirventes, full of violence and insolence, reflecting his character and turbulent life. Several of his cansos have also survived.

Bertran de Born (c. 1140 – 1215) was one of the most famous Occitan troubadours of the 12th century, a participant in the great political struggles of the age. He composed love poems, but his priority was mostly writing sirventes on political themes, extolling war as the only deed worthy of a true knight. Thirty-seven of the troubadour's works have certainly come down to us, and 11 others can only be supposed to be his. His last known work was written in 1198. Both through his work and his lifestyle, Bertrand de Born remains a strong representative of the ideology of feudal chivalry.

The Monk of Montaudon / Monge de Montaudon, (1155 – 1213) was a nobleman, monk and troubadour. Although seven of his cansos have come down to us, he is best known for the two genres of which he was probably the creator: *enuig* (supplication) and *plazer* (pleasure), where the troubadour humorously lists things that cause him sadness or joy. Four of his enuigs have survived. The lyrics are metaphorical, his tensos representing a kind of dialogue with God. The Monk of Montaudon was not an adherent of war, and his skeptical attitude toward the Crusades is evident in his work. Only one of his melodies has come down to us.

Countess de Die / Beatriz de Dia (c. 1140 – AD 1175) is the first in the chronological list of seventeen female troubadours (trobairitz) for whom there are surviving records. She wrote in the light poetic style (*trobar leu*). To accompany her songs she usually used the flute. Five of her works have survived, including four cansos and a tenso whose music is preserved in a manuscript collection of songs recorded around 1270.

Marie de Ventadour or Maria de Ventadorn (Occitanian) was the other most important and celebrated female troubadour of the late 12th and early 13th centuries. Her date of birth is unknown, and the year of her death is most likely 1222. Unfortunately, only one tenso from 1197 survives from her work.

Gui d'Ussel, d'Ussèl, or d'Uisel (1195 – 1225) was the youngest of the three sons of the wealthy lords of the castle of Ussel-sur-Sarzonne. Twenty of his works survive: eight cansos, two pastourelles, two coblas and eight tensos, some of them written with his relatives. Four of the melodies to his cansos have also survived.

Cadenet (c. 1160 – c. 1235) has lived and worked at the court of Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse and Marquis of Provence. There are 25 of his songs extant, and only one of the

³ *Sestina* - a series of six six-line unrhymed stanzas followed by a three-line seventh stanza.

melodies to them is available. Cadenet's songs extol friendship, love and wine, but are also politically engaged, criticising feudal lords for their haughty behaviour.

Raimon de Miraval (c. 1135/1160 – c. 1220) was a poor knight of Carcassonne. Forty-five of his songs have come down to us, 37 of them cansos. The melodies of 22 of them have been preserved. They are in the light style.

Peire Cardenal (c. 1180 – c. 1278) was a troubadour known for his satirical sirventes and critical attitude towards the clergy. As many as 96 plays have survived from his oeuvre. The music of only 3 of them survives, and two of these three were composed by Giraut de Bornel and the Toulouse troubadour Raymond Jordan respectively. Like many of his contemporaries, Peyre Cardenal often used the method of the *contrafactum*.

Peirol or **Peiròl** (c. 1160 – c. 1220) was a poor knight working as a singer for the Dauphin of Auvergne. Peirol sang and played the viola. The poetic style was light (*trobar leu*). Thirty-four works by Peirol have survived. Seventeen of them have the melodies preserved. Most of the troubadour's works are cansos, but there are also extant sirvenetes and tensos.

Raimon de Miraval (c. 1135/1160 – c. 1220) was a poor knight of Carcassonne. Forty-five of his songs have come down to us, 37 of them cansos. The melodies of 22 of them have been preserved. They are in the light style.

Guillem de Cabestany (1162 – 1212) was a Catalan troubadour from Cabestany in the present-day southeastern France. He is a striking representative of Provençal troubadour poetry with his songs inspired by love. Only seven works by Guillem de Cabestany have survived. His melancholic canso “The sweetly bitter sadness with which Cupid bestowed me...” has come down to us in as many as 22 manuscripts, which speaks for its immense popularity.

Guilhem de Montanhagol (known from 1233 – 1268) was the most significant troubadour of the late period. Fourteen of his pieces survive, including seven cansos, six serventas, and one tenso (a participle with the most popular Italian troubadour, Sordello). His poetry is politically engaged, opposing the Papal Inquisition and pleading for mercy for the Cathars persecuted by it. His main contribution is considered to be the linking of the theme of courteous love with that of Christian virtues and morals. He is considered the link between Occitan and Italian poetry.

Sordello da Goito or Sordel de Goit (1200/20 – 1269/70) was the most popular Italian troubadour of the 13th century. Forty of his love and satirical songs have come down to us. Dante Alighieri immortalised him in his Divine Comedy, the British poet Robert Browning dedicated his poem “Sordello” to him, and Oscar Wilde - his poem “Amor Intellectualis” (Intellectual Love).

Lanfranco Cigala (c. 1235 – 1257) was an Italian troubadour who wrote in Provençal. Thirty-two pieces have survived from his oeuvre, including seven cansos dedicated to the courtly love, four religious cansos, three sirventes, two crusader songs and one lament. His cansos praise the Blessed Virgin Mary, the leader of the Crusades who conquered the Holy Land. In addition to being a writer of politically and religiously engaged lyrics, Lanfranco Sigala remains known as one of the best representatives of the “new light style” (*dolce stil nuovo*), which was fashionable in the 13th century.

Guiraut Riquier (c. 1230 – 1292) was the last significant troubadour of the classical era. He wrote 89 cansos and 15 poems. His six pastourelles are judged to be the most significant. Guiraut Riquier is also well known for the fact that he maintained and systematized his works very well.

2.3. Styles and genres in the work of troubadours

Trobar clus (“dark style” or also the so-called “closed style”) – one of the stylistic directions in the poetry of the troubadours, understood by a narrower circle of the most demanding listeners. Its creator is considered to be Marcabru

Trobar leu (“light style”): the most popular style in the poetry of the troubadours, and its most distinguished representative is the great Bernart de Ventadorn.

Trobar ric (“refined style”, “elegant style”) - arises from the combination of the dark and the light styles, combining the metaphorical quality of the former and the clarity of expression of the latter. Count Raimbaut d'Aurenga is considered the founder of the style. The main representatives are Peire d'Alvernhe, Giraut de Bornelh and Arnaut Daniel

Alba (from Catalan for “sunrise”), a subgenre of the Provençal, Occitan, Catalan, and other poetic traditions. Often describes the longing of lovers, having spent the night together, who must separate in the face of the fear of being exposed by their lawful spouses

Viandela - a road song, the only specimen of which we owe to the troubadour Severi de Chirona.

Enuig (enuieg) - a genre of poetry practised by troubadours, representing a kind of lamentatory prayer

Canso (Ital. canzona) - a major genre in the poetry of the troubadours, consisting of several stanzas (coblas) and ending with a so-called “tornada” in which the poet addresses the lady of his heart or his patron with a request or appeal.

Cobla (cobla esparsa) - a unit in troubadour poetry representing a number of verses that create a sense of rhythmic and meaningful unity, a stanza

Descort - a subgenre of the canso created by the troubadours and adopted by the trouvères in which each stanza has its own structure and the musical structure is directly opposed to the song structure.

Lament (planh) - a poem or song expressing deep sorrow, elegy, lament. There are about 40 extant examples, the most famous being Bertrand de Born's lament on the death of the young King Henry (brother of Richard the Lionheart) and the song Sordello dedicated to the loss of his patron, Blacatz.

Pastourelle - a musical piece inspired by the idealized simple life and music of the shepherds. These are slow, lyrical and emotional works.

Tenso (dispute, debate) - a major dialogic genre in which two troubadours argue over issues of courtly love or poetry.

Partimen - a subgenre of the tenso in troubadour poetry in which one presents a dilemma in the form of a question, and then two troubadours debate the answer, each taking an opposing side. Very popular in poetry competitions at the time.

Sirvente (Occ. sirventes – the word is masculine) – one of the three main genres in troubadour poetry dealing with politics, religion, morality, extolling chivalry and exploits. One of the greatest creators of sirventes was Bertrand de Bourne.

Crusade song (Fr. Chanson de croisade) – a subgenre of the sirvente. Marcabru is considered the progenitor with his “Song of Atonement” (“Vers du lavador”). Some 30 crusade

songs have been preserved, mainly devoted to the marches to the east to recapture the Holy Sepulchre.

Lai - a verse-confessional genre of a lyrical or epic character intended to be sung. It reached its heyday in the 14th century in the work of the French trouvère Guillaume de Machaut.

Concluding the section with representatives of the troubadours the following conclusions could be drawn: The emergence of troubadours in the 11th century represents a new qualitative and unique step in the development of poetic-musical creativity that began in antiquity with the activities of ancient Egyptian, Assyro-Babylonian, ancient Indian and Chinese priests, priests and storytellers, continued with the ancient Greek aoidoi and rhapsodes, and developed in the early Middle Ages with the work of Celtic bards and philid, Scandinavian skalds, and British scops. The work of the troubadours enriched world culture with the sophistication of their poetry. There are 264 square-notated song pieces extant from it, giving some insight into what their performances sounded like, and the development of the music during the period of their existence. Although in the following centuries the followers of the troubadours in different parts of Europe were called by different names, the term “troubadour” persists to this day as a descriptive term for the poets-singers who accompanied their performances with a stringed instrument (lyre, lute). In the last one hundred - one hundred and fifty years, this instrument has most often been the **guitar**.

2.4. The Bulgarian trace

The hypothesis of the so-called “Bulgarian trace” in the story of the appearance of the troubadours is interesting. Around the beginning of the second millennium AD, the Cathar movement appeared in the lands of Occitania. This was a religious sect whose ideology was closely related to the ideas of the Bulgarian *Bogomils*, whose movement occurs in the First Bulgarian Empire in the X-th century AC. According to most researchers, the Cathars are the very Bogomils who migrated to these lands in the early 11th century. The migration of the Bogomils began as early as the reign of King Samuel (who ruled from 997 to 1014), and in addition to Occitania they penetrated Albania, Dalmatia, Serbia, Italy, Germany, Flanders, England and Kievan Rus. The Cathars were also called Albigensians, which name comes from the city of Albi, located in the center of Occitania. They were also called bugri (Bougres, Bulgarians), Patarenes, Paulicians, and were fiercely persecuted by the Catholic Church as heretics. In a decree, King Louis IX of France called the society of the Cathars “Bulgarian heresy”. Thanks to their close ties with troubadours and minnesingers, their ideas reached court circles in Occitania, Aragon and northern Italy. According to some claims, Bernart de Ventadorn himself was a follower of Cathar ideas, and his ancestry was from among the Bulgarian settlers-Bogomils. As for the etymology of the name “troubadour”, the Bulgarian researcher of the history of the Cathars, Dr. Petar Hadzhidimitrov, gives another hypothesis: *“The words “troubadour” and “troubar”, which are related in meaning and morphology, contain a common base “trub” or “truba”, which is documented in the Old Bulgarian language and meant “wind instrument”. In Old Bulgarian there was also the derivative word “trubatch” - player of a wind instrument, truba. The Old Bulgarian words “trubach”, “truba player”, have passed into modern Bulgarian, Russian and Serbian and are used to this day. In this case the base “truba-” and the endings “-ar” and “-dor” in the French words troubadour and trubar may originate from the Old Bulgarian language”*. Another remarkable fact is that the museum in the town of Puever (Occitania) preserves musical instruments (gadulka, kaval, tambura, duduk and bagpipe (called gaida) that were played by the Cathars and probably also by the

Cathars-troubadours. It is also noteworthy that the sunset of the troubadour tradition occurred simultaneously with the destruction of the Cathar movement during the so-called Albigensian Crusade, organized by Pope Innocent III, who in 1204 concluded an ecclesiastical union with our King Kaloyan and recognized him with the title of “King”.

CHAPTER III

TROUVÈRES, MINNESINGERS, MINSTRELS AND JONGLEURS, GOLIARDS

3.1. THE TROUVÈRES

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Latin language used in France evolved into two related languages: the language of northern France (“*langue d'oïl*”) and the language of southern France or Occitania (“*langue d'oc*”). While the troubadours of the south wrote their verse in the “*langue d'oc*”, accepted as the more lyrical and graceful of the two languages, their counterparts, the trouvères, emerged in the north. The lyrical poetry of the trouvères spread initially in eastern and northern France (the counties of Champagne, Flanders, the duchy of Brabant) and later in the territories north of the Loire, in the county of Anjou and the duchy of Normandy. The work of the trouvères was strongly influenced by that of the troubadours (subject matter, style, genre system, cult of courteous love, poetic skill). It develops in feudal courts and is strongly integrated into urban culture (Douai, Tours, Lille, Arras in the county of Flanders). Among the most famous trouvères are the names of **Chrétien de Troyes** (c. 1160 – 80); **Gace Brulé** (c. 1160 – after 1213); **Blondel de Nesle** (c. 1175 – 1210); **Chastelain de Couci** (c. 1170 – 1203); **Conon de Béthune** (c. 1180 – c. 1220); **Gautier de Dargies** (c. 1170 – after 1212). c. 1236); **Gautier de Coincy** (1177/8-1236); **Colin Muset** (c. 1200-1250); **Thibaud of Champagne / Theobald IV** (30.05.1201 – 8.07.1253); **Gautier d'Espinal** (lived until 1272); **Guillaume de Vinier** (known: c. 1220 – 1245); **Adam de la Halle** (c. 1240 – 1288).

It is widely believed that the trouvères and the troubadours were musicians travelling from town to town with a lute slung on their backs, but this description is more accurate for jongleurs and minstrels. The trouvères (as well as troubadours) actually represented aristocratic musicianship. They were both poets and composers, supported by the aristocracy and usually - themselves aristocrats. Among them one finds kings, queens, counts and countesses. Similar to the songs of the troubadours, those of the trouvères were often devoted to courtly (courteous) love and religious devotion, although there are also authors and works possessing a more earthly view of love. It is not entirely certain what the music of the trouvères sounds like. Some researchers suggest that it was performed in a tuneless, free-rhythmic style and with limited use of accompaniment instruments. However, there are also researchers who believe that rhythm has been used in some of the accompaniments. According to the fourteenth-century Parisian music theorist Johannes de Grocheio, “*the music of the trouvères inspired kings and nobles to do great deeds and to be great themselves*”. It is customary to divide the history of the trouvères and their art into **three periods**:

The **first period** lasted until the middle of the 12th century. It is defined as „pre-courtly love period”. During this period, the works of the trouvères approached folk poetry and music. The most popular genres were: romances (*chansons d'histoire, chansons de toile*), telling stories of love; dance songs (*rondel, reverdie, retroenge, etc.*); pastorelles, etc. They were distinguished by their simplicity and directness of expression. These works have come down to us mostly through copied manuscripts and in a revised form.

The **second period** extends roughly from the mid-12th to the mid-13th century. The poetry of the trouvères acquires a more cursive and concretized-author character. Its content is defined by the new secular-chivalric world-view with its cult of earthly joy and love, understood as a feeling exalting man and often passing into an exalted cult of the “lady of the heart”. The trouvères poetry is strongly influenced by that of the troubadours thanks to the intense literary exchange existing between Provence and France at the time. The most important trouvères of this period are considered to be **Chrétien de Troyes**, **Blondel de Nell**, **Conan of Bethune**, **Thibaut of Champagne (King of Navarre)** and others. The work of **Gus Brulet** and **Colin Musset** is particularly notable for its simplicity of expression, incorporating forms and motifs used in folklore at the time. The main genres were the canso, the partmen, the alba, the sirvente, and the pastourelle, reworked in a courtly spirit.

The **third period** (from the middle to the end of the 13th century) is associated with the emergence of the urban gentry. The new urban labourers living in the larger commercial and industrial centres united in particular organisations similar to poetic associations (puys). Although they retained many of the forms and techniques of the courtois lyric, they also brought in the new elements of rationalism, naturalism, subjectivism, and Marianism (the cult of the Mother of God). The genres most used by the trouvères were the pastourelle, the tenso, the alba, the sirvente and the canso, but as urban culture develop, the range of their work expanded. The imitation of the style and form of the folk dance song (*rondo*, *ballad*) became more prominent. Musical forms derived from church chants (*motet*) also developed. According to researchers, the most famous representative of the trouvères of this period are **Rutebeuf**, who worked during the reign of King Louis IX and **Adam de la Halle** (1240 – 1287), from whom a considerable number of works survived together with their music, including two small pieces with extensive musical interludes, regarded by scholars as a distant prototype of the opera. About two thousand songs by the trouvères have come down to us.

Compared with the poetry of the troubadours, the more democratic poetry of the trouvères was distinguished by its closeness to folk art (simpler metrics, rhyming structure and melodic structure of the songs, and less pronounced autonomy of the text from the music). At the same time, it is more reflective and inferior to the poetry of the troubadours in the immediacy of the expression of feelings. The poetry of the trouvères gave a remarkable influence on the poetry of 14th-century France and the prose and dramatic genres developed by them played an important role in the future of European literature and theatre.

3.2. MINNESIGNERS

The minnesingers were medieval German poets and singers, contemporaries of the Provençal troubadours and French trouvères, who composed and performed songs on various subjects - mainly love songs. Their art remains in the history of European culture as the tradition of the *minnesang*. The etymology of the word minnesinger derives from the German words *minne* (love) and *sänger* (singer) respectively. The social status of minnesingers is heterogeneous: among them one finds dukes, counts, kings and even Emperor Heinrich VI; but also ordinary but well-educated contemporaries of theirs distinguished with the title of Meister, such as Konrad von Würzburg, for example. The Meistersingers performed their own works and were highly respected in court circles. Their art flourished in the twelfth century and continued, according to some researchers, until the end of the thirteenth century and, according to others, until the end of the fourteenth century. Historically, the development of the German minesang went through three periods: *early*, *mature* and *late*.

Early minnesang - covers the period from ca. 1150 to the end of the 12th century. It originated around 1150 under the strong influence of the heroic epic and folk songs and gradually (c. 1180 – 1190) began to be influenced by Provençal and Northern French poetic traditions. The first minnesingers known to scholars were **Der von Kürenberg**, **Dietmar von Aist**, **Meinloh von Sevelingen** and **Spefogel**. They were representatives of the so-called “folk movement” in minnesang, which spread first to the areas east of Austria and later to Bavaria, Swabia, Thuringia and Switzerland. **Heinrich von Veldeke** and **Friedrich von Hausen** are considered to be the founding fathers of the “Courteous movement” for the minnesingers. At the end of the 12th century, the courteous style spread throughout Germany, with the work of **Heinrich von Morungen** and **Reinmar von Hagenau** being particularly notable.

Mature (classical) minnesang - covers the period from the beginning of the 13th century to 1230. It is considered to be the heyday and the most remarkable stage of the development of German chivalric lyrics. The influence of the art of troubadours and trouvères on the work of the minnesingers was even more marked as a result of the increased contacts between them and, not least, their frequent joint participation in the Crusades. Some of the most important representatives of the classical minnesingers were **Walther von der Vogelweide** (c. 1170-c. 1230), considered by most critics to be the greatest lyricist of the German Middle Ages, and **Wolfram von Eschenbach** (c. 1170 – c. 1220), accepted as the greatest German epic poet of the Middle Ages. His monumental poetic epic “Parsifal” provides the plot for R. Wagner's last musical drama “Parzifal” in 1882. Wolfram himself appears as a character in Wagner's early opera “Tannhäuser” (1845), as well as in “The Master-Singers of Nuremberg” (1867).

Late minnesang - from about 1230 – to the end of the 13th, beginning of the 14th century. It is characterized by a gradual decline of the work of the minnesingers. The works of **Neidhart von Reuenthal** (c. 1180 – c. 1246) and **Gottfried von Neifen** (who worked in the middle of the 13th century) leave their mark. The courteous minnesang was temporarily revived in the chivalric lyric in the 14th century. The Austrian **Hugo von Montfort** (1357 – 1423) and **Oswald von Wolkenstein** (c. 1377 – 1445) are considered to be the last minnesingers. The songs of minnesingers were usually accompanied by string instruments. A considerable amount of dedications with their melodies have been preserved, most of them in manuscripts from the 15th century or even later. Unfortunately, most of them were written in so-called neumes or square notes (*nota quadrata*), which makes them difficult to decipher. The German researcher P. Runge, in his work “Die Sangesweisen der Golmarer Handschrift” (“The Song Melodies of the Golmarer Manuscripts”) of 1896, proves that medieval song recordings were notated in the manner of church chorales and convey only the tones and melismas, while the rhythm depends exclusively on the text. One of the most remarkable artefacts of the poetry of the minnesingers that has come down to the present day is the so-called Codex Manesse, preserved in the library of the University of Heidelberg, consisting of 426 parchment manuscript sheets.

In the period from the end of the 14th century to the end of the 16th century, the minnesang was revived again and gave way to the tradition of the **meistersingers** (from *meister*-master and *sänger*-singer). They were town singers - mainly representatives of the craft guild, although teachers, priests and lawyers can also be found among them. In contrast to the sophisticated style of the minnesingers, the style of the **meistersingers** was coarse and mocking, seeking to bring entertainment to the common people. The main instrument to accompany their performances was the lute. They organized themselves into a guild and trained in special singing schools, also organizing competitions among themselves. The most famous **meistersinger** was the Nuremberg shoemaker **Hans Sachs**, who composed 4275 songs and founded his own singing school in Frankfurt am Main. Other schools were founded in Strasbourg, Würzburg, Zurich, Magdeburg, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Prague. In 1867 Richard Wagner immortalised the image of Sachs and the life of the **meistersingers** in his opera “The

Master-singers of Nuremberg”. The tradition of the *meistersingers* persisted until the 19th century: the *Meistersinger* society in Ulm ended up in 1839 and the last school in Memmingen was closed in 1844.

3.3. MINSTRELS

Perhaps most similar in character and function to the English *scopses* are the minstrels. The etymology of the word minstrel comes from the Latin word *ministerialis* (servant). Minstrels were professional musicians, singers and poets in the Middle Ages (from the 12th century) and early Renaissance, making a living from singing and playing musical instruments. They were often confused with troubadours, the main difference being that while troubadours stand higher in the class hierarchy and almost always performed their own works, minstrels performed other’s works as well as their own. Very often minstrels worked as assistants to troubadours, performing their songs or accompanying them using viola or lute, and also sometimes - a flute, bagpipe, zither, flageolet or timpani drum. As with the troubadours, although rare, female minstrels were also found. In order to better defend their rights, the minstrels of the city formed professional guilds similar to those of the artisans, and so in 1321 the first so-called minstrelsy was founded in Paris. To be admitted as a member, each minstrel was subjected to a special examination. In 1381, a corporation of minstrels was also founded in Staffordshire, England, called the Minstrel Court, governed by a so-called “king” of minstrels”. The guild became so influential that it required non-member minstrels to either join or give up active participation. In the 14th century, in both France and Anglo-Saxon lands, both itinerant and stationed musicians were called minstrels. In 1407, minstrels received a patent from the French King Charles VI legalizing their rights. This patent remained influential until the 18th century, when minstrel activity died out. However, individual singers kept the minstrel tradition alive until the early 19th century. In conclusion, it should be noted that the tradition of minstrel art received a kind of “rebirth” in the twentieth century, right up to the present day through the art of the so-called “street musicians”, or “*buskers*”. The way of life of minstrels, as well as their professional style, comes closest to today’s understanding and definition of the essence of **modern professional troubadours-entertainers**.

3.4. JONGLEURS

The name *jongleur* is derived from the Old French word *jongleur* and the Latin *joculator* (joker, wit). The *jongleurs* were medieval travelling artists, professional singers and storytellers in Western European countries with a Romance culture. In German-speaking countries they were called *spielmann*. The *jongleurs* are considered the descendants of the Latin mimes. In addition to musicians and singers, many of them were also magicians, acrobats, dancers, puppeteers and even beast tamers. They were proficient in several musical instruments, with viola usually being the main one. Many of the *jongleurs* (as the minstrels) were used as assistants to the troubadours, and the most gifted of them rose to become troubadours. Such was the case with the two eminent Gascons, **Sercamon** and **Marcabru**. Very popular for their time were the three *jongleurs* assisting the famous Bertran de Born: **Papiol**, **Guillon** and **Miloli**. Another popular troubadour, Arnaut de Marillais, was inseparable from his no less famous *jongleur* called **Pistoleta** (epistle, little letter). Pistoleta, like Sercamon and Marcabru, went his own way and began a career as a troubadour around 1205. He composed a large number of *cansos* and *tenso*s. The *trouvère* **Jean Bodel** (1165 – 1210) was also described as a professional *jongleur*. He was considered to be one of the first representatives of North French urban poetry. The art of *jongleurs* was based on professional traditions usually passed down through

inheritance. Their distinctly secular and satirical work incurred the disfavor of the church, which subjected them to persecution. During the 12th and 13th centuries, there was a growing division among the jongleurs, and many of them started serving at court, others ceased to travel and began lives as urban musicians. Both minstrels and, to some extent, jongleurs, by the nature of their activity, resemble in some ways what modern professional troubadours-entertainers do today.

3.5. GOLIARDS AND VAGANTES

The goliards (also called *vagantes* or *vagrants*) were poets and singers that emerged in the Middle Ages (11th – 14th centuries). They originated from the clergy and were mostly students from the universities of France, Germany, Spain, Italy and England who protested through their songs against the problems of their time such as the growing contradictions in the church, corruption, the failure of the Crusades, etc. Their works were filled with irony and sarcasm, and their performances often ended up in scandals and drunken brawls. The goliards often parodied papal priests and regulations and even the Bible and the Pope. The main language used in their works was Latin. Many of their songs were on amorous and erotic themes, calling for a life free of dogma and inhibitions and denying Christian ethics, which was why the the goliards were in constant conflict with the church and were constantly persecuted by it. Few of the names of the goliards have come down to us. These are **Hugo Primas of Orléans**, **Pierre de Blois**, **Walter von Chatillon**, and the anonymous “**Archipoet**”, of whom there are 10 extant works. The most voluminous extant manuscript collection of goliard poetry is the “*Carmina Burana*”, containing 254 songs and dramatic texts from Occitania, France, the Holy Roman Empire, England, Scotland, Aragon and Castile. The collection inspired the German composer Carl Orff, who in 1937 composed the stage cantata “*Carmina Burana*”. Since only a small part of the goliard’s works was notated, it is assumed that almost all of their poetry was intended to be sung. Their songs are considered the earliest surviving artifacts of secular music. The student hymn “*Gaudeamus Igitur*” belongs to the genre of the table goliard songs.

As a summary of what has been written so far, it should be pointed out that there is a clear continuity in the existence and activities of all the above-mentioned societies of poetic-song culture. The aoidoi and rhapsodes in ancient Greece often presented their odes in song form using an accompaniment of musical instruments. The bards, skalds, scopes, troubadours, trouvères, minstrels, jongleurs and goliards did the same. Over time, and especially with the emergence of troubadours, trouvères and minnesingers, the form of poetic creation took on new dimensions. Some of the oldest surviving notations (with square notes) of religious and secular texts date from this time. They give us an idea of the way music sounded in the Middle Ages. In his interviews, the eminent Bulgarian erudite, musicologist and performer of Baroque music Prof. Yavor Konov and the great contemporary composer prof. Georgi Arnaudov stress the importance of context embedded in instrumental musical works. Viewed in a mirror aspect, poetry presented in song form gains even greater expressiveness and nuance. The work of all the above poetic-musical societies makes an undeniable contribution to the development of world culture. The labels “bard” and “troubadour” remain fully relevant to this day, and although their content has changed and been updated, they retain and carry the symbol and romance of the medieval artists.

The following table gives an idea in historical terms of the periods of existence of poetic-musical societies from their emergence – until the twentieth century.

Bards and troubadours. Predecessors and followers				
Representatives	Place of origin and activity	Initial occurrence	Heyday	Disappearance
Aoidoi	Ancient Greece	ca. 10th – 9th century BC	7th – 6th century BC	ca. 6th century BC
Rhapsodes	Ancient Greece	ca. 8th (7th) – 3rd century BC.	6th - 4th century BC	ca. 3rd century BC.
Bards	Gaul	ca. 2nd century BC.	no data	ca. 1st – 2nd century AD.
	England	ca. 1st century AD.	no data	ca. 1st – 2nd century AD ⁴
	Wales and Cornwall	ca. 1st century AD	5th – 11th century AD	19th century
	Ireland	ca. 1st century AD	5th – 17th century AD	17th century AD.
	Scotland	ca. 1st century AD	5th – 17th century AD	18th century AD
Filid	Ireland	ca. 1st century AD	5th – 12th century AD	12th century AD ⁵
Scops	England	7th – 8th century AD	8th – 10th century AD	12th century AD
Skalds	Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden	8th – 9th century AD	8th – 12th century AD	14th century AD
Troubadours	Occitania	11th century AD	11th – 14th century AD	14th century AD
Trouvères	Northern France	11th – 12th century AD	12th – 14th century AD	14th century AD
Minnesingers	Holy Roman Empire - Kingdom of Germany	11th – 12th century AD	12th century AD	14th century AD
Maistersingers	Holy Roman Empire – Kingdom of Germany	late 14th century	15th – 16th century	19th – early 20th century
Minstrels	Occitania, France, England	11th – 12th century AD	14th – 18th century AD	19th century
Jongleurs	Occitania, France, England	11th – 12th century AD	12th – 14th century AD	14th – 15th century AD
Goliards	Occitania, England, France, Germany	11th – 12th century AD	12th – 14th century AD	12th – 14th century AD

⁴ Due to the occupation by Rome (43 - 410 AD)

⁵ Due to the Anglo-Norman invasion (1169 - 1172 AD)

Chapter IV

CONTEMPORARY TROUBADOURS

Having examined the history of the various groups of poet-musicians from the beginning of the Middle Ages to the advent of the Renaissance, we may observe that all these currents gradually declined. Individual “keepers of the tradition“ of bards, minstrels and minnesingers continued to be active into the 18th and even into the 19th centuries, but there are hardly any substantial artefacts of them surviving. During the Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic periods, the genres of chamber and symphonic music, opera and ballet flourished. Keyboard instruments and orchestras revealed the power of polyphony. The flute, viola, lute and guitar developed as solo musical instruments, or participating in musical formations of different shape and size. Because of its accessibility and versatility, the guitar gradually gained an edge over other musical instruments as an accompaniment instrument for the songs of the common people. Having become the 'instrument of the people' in Spain and Italy as early as the 13th-14th centuries, by the late 19th century the **guitar** had become the most popular and accessible instrument throughout Europe, the Americas. Thousands of musicians, poets or simply people with an artistic nature began to use the guitar as an aid to express and perform their poetic inspirations or political positions and protests. They were not the troubadours of the Middle Ages, but in some way they continued the line of work of the troubadours, bards, minstrels, minnesingers. As a mark of respect, many of the most significant of them are called “bards” or “troubadours”. This chapter will identify some of the most significant singer-songwriters of the last one hundred and fifty years.

Chronologically speaking, data on the “new type” of artists performing their own songs leads us first to Scandinavia, where in the 18th century “Sweden's last skald” - Karl Mikael Bellman wrote. Then it moves us to Brittany, where Yann Ar Minouz (1827 – 1892) toured and performed his ballads at the end of the 19th century, and at the same time sold many printed copies of his works. Anatole Le Braz (1859 – 1926), the prominent British folklorist of that time, writes about him. Jean Baptiste Théodore Marie Botrel (1868 – 1925) was a very popular composer of songs, poet and playwright. He was also born in Brittany and with his songs, written during the World War I, he gained the fame of a national idol of France and was called “The Bard of the Armies”. Later we will return to the French and Swedish authors, but let us now look at the regions and countries that gave the strongest impetus to the development of pop culture in the 20th century, namely: North America, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

4.1. North America

As we know, the culture of America is a colourful conglomeration of both the folklore of the indigenous population and, above all, the cultures of all the nations and races that have settled there since the 16th century. Starting with the Spanish and Portuguese and going on to the English, Irish, Scots, French, Scandinavians, Germans and Slavs, Africans and Asians. In North America – the so-called “country music” (rural, rustic music) developed with the settlement of immigrants, and towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries - the blues and (a little later) the jazz, became very popular. Many of the old English, Irish and Scottish ballads created as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were mixed and interwoven into the newly emerging folklore of the settlers coming from the Old World. What followed was a natural process of gradual change, updating the texts and melodies and adapting them to the new conditions of life. Songs and instrumental tunes of English, Irish and Scottish origin, which laid the foundation for the emergence of country music,

occupy a special place in American folklore. Rural youth readily danced to this music played on handmade fiddles and sang songs and ballads accompanied on banjo or guitar. While country music is mainly based on the culture of British-Irish ballads and dances, blues music, which developed originally in the southern states and especially in Louisiana among the indigenous predominantly Cajun, Creole and African-American population, is the result of the mixture of the cultures of many nations, with African-Americans contributing the most. Among the first singers and songwriters to leave a lasting mark on American music history are Lead Belly (Huddie William Ledbetter) (1888 – 1949), Jimmie Rodgers (1897 – 1933), Blind Lemon Jefferson (1893 – 1929), T-Bone Walker (1910 – 1975), Blind Willie McTell (1898 – 1959), Lightnin’ Hopkins (1912 – 1982), Robert Leroy Johnson (1911 – 1938) Much could be written about each of these “troubadours” of the North American song, but because of the broad scope of this study, we will focus only on the most significant of them.

Lead Belly, or Huddie William Ledbetter, as his real name is, was born on January 20, 1888 in Louisiana. He left a very bright mark on the world of country, blues and rock music. Covers of his songs have been recorded and performed by many of the world’s greatest singers and bands, e.g., Lonnie Donegan, Pete Seeger, Elvis Presley, Harry Belafonte, Frank Sinatra, Johnny Cash, Van Morrison, Rod Stewart, Tom Russell, Ry Cooder, Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Animals, Led Zeppelin, Nirvana, and many others.

Robert Leroy Johnson (8.05 1911 –16.08 1938) was an American blues musician and songwriter, considered one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century. He is the most significant representative of the so-called “delta blues” (one of the oldest known forms of blues music).

Another towering figure of American song who fully deserves the “title” troubadour is **Woodrow Wilson (Woody) Guthrie** (14.07.1912 – 3.10.1967). He created hundreds of songs with politically engaged themes, household and children's songs and ballads. His work has inspired many of the greatest songwriters such as Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Bruce Springsteen, Joan Baez, Christy Moore, Arlo Guthrie and many others.

Josh White (Joshua Daniel White) (11.02.1914 – 6.09.1969) was a legendary American guitarist and singer, songwriter, actor and civil rights activist. He was the first black singer-guitar player admitted to Hollywood and Broadway and the first to sell a record in the millions (“One Meatball”).

Pete Seeger (3.05.1919 – 27.01.2014) –American songwriter, singer, writer and peace activist. A master of the 5-string banjo for which he wrote a textbook considered one of the most successful ever.

Hank Williams (17.09.1923 – 1.01.1953) is considered the father of modern country music. In just five years of an active musical career, interrupted by his death at the age of 29, Hank Williams wrote an enormous amount of songs that shapes the face of honky-tonk and country music forever. 35 of his songs have entered the country music charts, 11 of them at number one.

Johnny Cash (26.02.1932 – 12.09.2003) – American singer, songwriter, actor and writer identified as one of the most significant figures in 20th century country music.

Joan Baez (born January 9, 1941) is an American author and performer of politically engaged and folk songs and an active campaigner for human rights and the environment. She became very popular in the 1960s for her protest songs against racial discrimination and the Vietnam War. A strong influence on her work gave Bob Dylan, with whom she collaborated for years.

Bob Dylan or **Robert Allen Zimmerman** was born on May 24, 1941 in Duluth, Minnesota. He is one of the most significant poets, singers and songwriters of the 20th century. Many of his most popular works were written in the sixties, when Bob Dylan became one of the symbols of social protest in the western world. Songs such as “Blowin' in the Wind” and “The Times They Are a-Changin'” were anthems of the civil rights struggle and the anti-war movement. “Like a Rolling Stone”, released in 1965, totally changed the parameters of pop music. He has won numerous awards including Grammy, Oscar, Golden Globe, Pulitzer. In 2016, Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Paul Frederic Simon (13.10.1941) is the other giant of American song. Together with Art Garfunkel, they created the duo Simon and Garfunkel. Many of their songs such as “Bridge Over troubled Water”, “Mrs Robinson”, “The Boxer” remain forever in the golden fund of pop music. Almost all of the songs were written by Paul Simon, who went on to a highly successful career after their break-up. He holds an honorary doctorate in music from Berklee College of Music, and is an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2006, he was named one of “100 People Who Shaped the World” by Time magazine.

Carole King (born February 9, 1942) is an American singer and songwriter. Her song “You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman” became an absolute hit in Aretha Franklin's performance. Seven of King's albums are in the top ten on the Billboard charts.

John Denver or Henry John Deutschendorf jr. (31.12.1943-12.10.1997) recorded about 300 songs, of which 200 are his own compositions. Among his most notable songs are “Annie's Song”, “Take me Home, Country Roads”, “Leaving on a Jet Plane”, “Rocky Mountain High”.

Joni Mitchell is a Canadian singer of Norwegian-Irish-Scottish descent, songwriter, musician and artist. She was born on 7.11.1943 in Canada. Although she composes most of her songs on the piano, it is interesting that in almost every song she writes with the guitar, the tuning of the instrument is open, out of the standard. There are about 50 songs with different guitar tunings. Her album “Blue” was named by Rolling Stone magazine as one of the thirty greatest albums of all time. In 2003 it also placed her at number 72 among the best guitarists on the planet, the highest position occupied by a woman.

John Cameron Fogerty (8.05.1945) is a singer, guitar player and songwriter and founder of one of the greatest rock bands of the United States, Creedence Clearwater Revival (CCR). Among his band's biggest hits are “Susie Q”, “Have You Ever Seen the Rain”, “Hey, Tonight”, “Down on the Corner”, “Travelin' Band”, “Bad Moon Rising”, “Proud Mary” (later to become Tina Turner's biggest hit). The songs of John Fogerty are an essential part of the repertoire of any professional troubadour.

Neil Percival Young (12.11.1945) began his career as a member of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young band. In 1968 he also released his first solo album, beginning a string of 35 studio albums with an extraordinary variety of musical styles that sold 80 million copies. In 1969, Young gave new life to the rock band the Crazy Horse (with which he has collaborates to this day) and recorded 22 albums over the years. With his deeply individual lyricism and distinctive guitar sound, Neil Young's songs rank him among North America's most significant troubadours.

Bruce Frederick Joseph Springsteen (“The Boss”), was born on September 23, 1949 in New Jersey. He is a singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, the originator of the “Heartland rock” genre. His two most successful albums are “Born to Run” (1975) and “Born in the U.S.A” (1984). Very strong are the double album “The River” (1980) and its follow-up “Nebraska” (1982), on which Springsteen recorded all the instruments himself. In 2004, Rolling Stone magazine placed him twenty-third on its list of the 100 greatest musicians of all time.

Some of the most significant “troubadours” or songwriters and performers from North America have been mentioned so far. Due to the huge selection of worthy representatives of the genre, were missed such outstanding creators and artists as: **Dave Crosby**, **Stephen Stills** and **Graham Nash** of the supergroup Crosby, Stills & Nash; the velvet-voiced country singer **Don Williams**; one of the best “storytellers” **Kenny Rogers**; and the intellectual **Don McLean** (author of the great “American Pie” and “Vincent”); the superstar **James Taylor**; the inimitable Canadian romantic **Gordon Lightfoot** (who penned the wonderful ballad “If You Could Read My Mind”); and the no less captivating **Jim Crouchie**, who lived only 30 years; the extraordinary **Kris Kristofferson** (who wrote some of America's finest country ballads); the incredible innovator and eccentric **Frank Zappa**; the divine **Jimi Hendrix**; the Canadian poet **Leonard Cohen**; **Tracy Chapman**, who gained extraordinary popularity with “Talkin' 'bout a Revolution”, the Canadian **Brian Adams**; **Chris Cornell**, who left us so early; the contemporary superstar **Taylor Swift** and many, many more. The vocalists and (very often) guitar players of the great American rock bands The Doors, The Eagles, Lynard Skinard, R.E.M. The Band, Nirvana, Bon Jovi, Guns and Roses, and Metallica could rightly be placed in this overview. They all write songs and perform them, sometimes with a full band, sometimes alone – with a guitar in hands, reminding us of the medieval troubadours, bards and minstrels.

4.2. South America

The musical and poetic culture of South America is extremely rich, but for very understandable reasons it is not as well known worldwide as North American culture. Since the two main languages are Spanish and Portuguese, this largely explains the nature of poetry and music there. The guitar is undoubtedly the most popular and used musical instrument in Latin America, so that we can say with confidence that there are tens of thousands of modern followers of European troubadours and bards in this part of the world. We will focus on perhaps the most familiar.

Atahualpa Yupanqui / Héctor Roberto Chavero Aranburu Atahualpa Yupanqui (31.01.1908 – 23.05.1992) was an Argentine singer, songwriter, guitar player and writer. He is considered the most important Argentine folk musician of the 20th century. Yupanqui was awarded high honors in Argentina and France. Among his most famous songs are “Los Hermanos”, “Duerme Negrito”, “Nada mas”, “Milonga del peón de campo”.

Violeta Parra / Violeta del Carmen Parra Sandoval (4.10.1917 – 5.02.1967) was a Chilean singer, songwriter and composer. She was also a respected folklorist and ethnomusicologist, whose work laid the foundation for the emergence of the so-called “New Chilean Song”, inspired by the musical traditions of all Latin America. Violeta Parra's most popular song is “Gracias a la Vida”.

Victor Jara / Víctor Lidio Jara Martínez (28.09.1932 – 16.09.1973) was a Chilean teacher, theatre director, poet, singer and songwriter. Political activist and member of the Communist Party of Chile. In addition to being a respected director, Victor Jara occupied a central place among the musicians who developed the style of the so-called “La nueva canción Chilena” (“New Chilean song”). During Pinochet's military coup, the singer was arrested and taken with many others to a stadium in Santiago (later named “Victor Jara”), tortured and shot on 16 September 1973. In addition to his songs released in 10 studio and 5 concert albums, Victor Jara managed to stage 18 theatrical plays and one ballet-musical production in honor of Pablo Neruda.

4.3. United Kingdom and Ireland

Central to twentieth-century European pop culture are the countries of the United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales) and Ireland. In addition to folk traditions, the work of the new “troubadours” - poets presenting their excitements through songs performed by themselves with guitar accompaniment - was also crucial to the emergence of musical pop culture. Some of the most significant will be presented here.

Ewan MacColl (25.01.1915 – 22.10.1989) was a British singer-songwriter, poet and actor. Some of his most popular songs are “Dirty Old Town”, “The Manchester Rambler”, “Landscape with Chimneys” and “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” which won a Grammy with a cover by Roberta Flack years later (1972).

Lonnie Donegan / Anthony James “Lonnie” Donegan (29.04.1931 – 3.11.2002) was known as the King of Skiffle, with 24 “top 30” hits in the UK and 2 in the US, described as one of the main inspirations for the generation of British musicians of the 1960s. In the Guinness Book of British Hit Singles and Albums, Donegan is listed as the most successful and inspirational recording artist until the advent of The Beatles.

Roger Whittaker (22.03.1936 – 18.09.2023) was born and raised in Kenya, but his parents were English. His song “The Last Farewell” released in 1975 became his greatest hit, selling 11 million copies that year. He also achieved great success with a cover version of Ralph McTell's song “The Streets of London”. Roger Whittaker has released 28 albums, with the total number of his silver, gold and platinum albums exceeding 250.

John Winston Lennon (9.10.1940 – 8.12.1980) was an English musician, singer and songwriter who gained extraordinary worldwide popularity as a founding member of The Beatles. Together with Paul McCartney he formed one of the most valuable creative tandems of the 20th century. With the break-up of the group in the late 1960s, John Lennon indulged in a solo career. John Lennon had 25 “number one” hits on Billboard magazine's Hot 100 music charts. In Rolling Stone magazine's ranking of the 50 greatest performers of all time, he was ranked twice: once at number one with the Beatles and once at number 38 for personal contribution. After a major poll, media giant the BBC placed him eighth among the 100 greatest Britons of all time.

James Paul McCartney (18.06.1942) is the other co-founder of the most successful band of all time - The Beatles. According to the Guinness World Records institution, Paul McCartney is the most successful songwriter and recording artist of all time with 60 gold records and over 100 million singles and over 100 million albums sold. He is also the most successful songwriter in the history of the UK music charts. In addition to the albums recorded with The Beatles, Paul McCartney has released 31 albums of pop and rock music, 8 albums of classical music and 5 albums of electronic music. Paul McCartney is a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) and an honorary Doctor of Music of Yale and Essex Universities.

George Harrison (25.02.1943 – 29.11.2001) was an English guitar player, singer and songwriter. He was the third musical giant of the great Beatles quartet. Harrison wrote some of the band's most beautiful songs: “Taxman”, “Within You Without You”, “While My Guitar Gently Weeps”, “Here Comes the Sun”, “For You Blue”, “Something”. In 1988, he co-founded the supergroup Travellin' Wilburys, featuring Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne. Rolling Stone magazine ranked Harrison number 11 on its list of the greatest guitarists of all time.

Ralph McTell, born Ralph May (3.12.1944) was a British singer, songwriter and guitarist who gained worldwide fame for his song “Streets of London” later sung in over 200 cover versions and the ballad for Irish emigrants “From Clare to Here”.

Eric Clapton (30.03.1945) is the only musician to have been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame three times: once as a member of the Yardbirds, once as a member of Cream and once as a solo guitarist. He has released 43 albums including 21 solo albums. Rolling Stone magazine ranked him second in its list of the 100 greatest guitar players of all time

Van Morrison (George Ivan Morrison) was born on August 31, 1945 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. His style was a particular blend of Irish folk music and American blues, soul and jazz, and described by some musicologists as “Celtic soul”. Some of his best-known songs are “Baby, Please Don't Go”, “Have I Told You Lately”, “Here Comes the Night”, “Mystic Eyes”, “Gloria”, “Brown Eyed Girl”, “Moondance” and others.

Christy Moore / Christopher Andrew “Christy” Moore (7.05.1945) is one of Ireland's best-loved contemporary troubadours. In 2007, he was named the greatest living Irish musician in the Irish Broadcasting Corporation's list. Many of his lyrics are pointedly political and support the idea of independence for Northern Ireland. Christie Moore's discography numbers more than 25 albums.

Donovan / Donovan Phillips Leitch (born 10 May 1946) is a Scottish singer, songwriter and guitar player. One of the most significant representatives of British folk-rock, he developed a distinctive style representing a blend of folk, jazz, pop, psychedelic rock. Among the most popular albums of the eccentric troubadour are “Mellow Yellow”, “The Hurdy Gurdy Man”, “Beat Café”, “Brother Sun, Sister Moon”, “Ritual Groove”, “Shadows of Blue”. Donovan has released over 30 albums to date.

David Bowie (David Robert Jones) (8.01.1947 – 10.01.2016) was a songwriter, performer, artist and musician. With his intellectual and eclectic style, he is considered an innovator in pop music and glam rock. The artist has sold over 140 million albums. Among his many honors are Grammy and Brit awards, he is a recipient of the French Order of Arts and Culture and holds an honorary doctorate in music from Berklee College. David Bowie is considered the inspiration of punk rock.

Yusuf Islam / **Cat Stevens** (Steven Demetre Georgiou) was born on July 21, 1948 in London. He is one of Britain's most iconic and talented songwriters, singer, multi-instrumentalist and humanitarian. In 1977 he converted to Islam and changed his name from Cat Stevens to Yusuf Islam. His songs “The First Cut Is the Deepest”, “Lady D'Arbanville”, “Hard Headed Woman”, “Wild World”, “Father and Son”, “Morning Has Broken” and “Moonshadow” remain forever in the golden fund of pop music. Cat Stevens is an honorary doctor of the Universities of Gloucester and Exeter.

Mark Knopfler / Mark Freuder Knopfler was born on 12.08.1949 in Glasgow, Scotland. He is the founder of the British rock band Dire Straits with which he recorded 6 highly successful albums and released 6 more compilations. As well as being a unique guitarist writing magnificent music, Knopfler is a sophisticated poet, as seen in his many songs such as “Sultans of Swing”, “Down to the Waterline”, “Wild West End”, “Romeo and Juliet”, “Private Investigations”, “Telegraph Road”, “So Far Away”, “Brothers in Arms”. His song “The Sultans of Swing” has been inducted into the “500 Songs That Shaped the World of Rock and Roll” Hall of Fame. Mark Knopfler holds honorary doctorates in music from the Universities of Newcastle, Leeds and Sunderland.

Sting (Gordon Matthew Thomas Sumner) was born on 2 October 1951 in the town of Wallsend near Newcastle. He is an iconic musician, singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist,

actor, philanthropist and public figure. He was the founder and songwriter of the band The Polis. Among his greatest songs are “Every Breath You Take”, “Roxanne” and “Message in a Bottle” recorded with The Polis, as well as “If You Love Somebody Set Them Free”, “Fragile”, “Englishman in New York”, “Shape of My Heart”, “Moon over Bourbon Street”. Apart from the extremely high musical level, his songs also possess highly intellectual and profound lyrics, proving the great talent of the author.

Ed Sheeran / Edward Christopher Sheeran (17.02.1991) is one of the UK's most prominent contemporary troubadours. His songs such as “Thinking Out Loud”, “Shape of You”, “Castle on the Hill” and “Perfect” have topped the music charts around the world.

Some of the UK and Ireland's most significant “contemporary troubadours” have been named so far. Outstanding singers and musicians have been deliberately omitted, but they do not represent that particular blend of performer, musician and poet at the same time that is needed to be able to call someone a “troubadour”, a “bard” or simply: a “poet with a guitar”. The large scope of the subject did not allow for many more outstanding masters of poetry expressed through song to be told, such as: Irish legend **Ronnie Drew**, founder of the great Dubliners; the highly expressive **Pete St John**; the romantic **Peter Saarsted**, the unforgettable **Rory Gallagher** and **Gary Moore**; the three pillars of Pink Floyd - **Syd Barrett**, **Roger Waters** and **David Gilmore**; **Ian Anderson** of the giants Jethro Tull, **Brian May** of the immortal Queen; the great piano-poet **Elton John**, the great **Rod Stewart**, **Mike Rutherford** of the Genesis; **Bono** from U2, etc., etc.

4.4. France and Belgium

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in the homeland of the troubadours and trouvères, today's France, the tradition of “guitar poets” was revived in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many distinguished artist-performers, who made their lasting mark on French-Belgian and world music-poetry culture, emerged. Aristide Bruant, Georges Brassens and Jacques Brel left some of the most significant traces.

Aristide Bruant (1851 – 1925) was one of the most famous legends of the French chanson, a songwriter and performer, writer, and comedian, extremely popular in Parisian bohemian circles and cabarets in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He wrote and performed his songs in slang (argot). Bruant is considered to be the creator of the so-called “realistic chanson” (chanson réaliste) and one of the landmark artists and representatives of the so-called Belle Époque.

Georges Brassens (22.10.1921 – 29.10.1981) was a French singer and songwriter. He is considered one of the most distinguished poets of post-war France. His style is direct and coarse, provoking the refined morality of the French audience and at the same time appealing for its sincerity. Georges Brassens is often described by many as the “troubadour of the 20th century”. The singer's creative legacy includes 250 songs (200 recorded and 50 unfinished), 12 albums, one novel and many more poems and verses.

Jacques Brel / Jacques Romain Georges Brel (8.04.1929 – 9.10.1978) was a Belgian singer and songwriter who gained incredible popularity in Belgium and France, and from there throughout the world. He has been described as a master of the modern chanson. Songs like “If You Go Away”, “The Dying Man”, “Bourgeois”, “Amsterdam” became extremely popular. In 1967 Brel also began a film career, appearing in 11 feature films (two of which he also directed) and another 10 where he played himself.

In the list of the modern French “troubadours” with some reservations could be placed the “bard of the armies” **Théodore Botrel** (1868 – 1925), the star of the French chanson **Maurice Chevalier** (1888 – 1972), the controversial romantic **Leo Ferré** (1916 – 1993), the passionate **Charles Aznavour** (1924 – 2018), the expressive **Gilbert Bécaud** (1927 – 2001), the “seducer” **Serge Gainsbourg** (1928 – 1991), the charmer **Joe Dassin** (1938 – 1980), the author of “My Way” **Claude François** (1939 – 1978), the French Elvis Presley – **Johnny Holiday** (1943 – 2017).

4.5 Italy

Italy, the homeland of the *bel canto*, also has its contemporary troubadours, whose fame, however, is somewhat more local, unlike that of their counterparts from the English-speaking countries or this of the great Italian opera singers. Here we can mention the famous winner of two Grammy Awards - **Domenico Modugno** (9.01.1928 – 6.07.1994); the winner of the San Remo Festival 1968 - **Sergio Endrigo** (15.06.1933-7.09.2005); the greatest star of Italian pop - **Adriano Celentano** (6. 01.1938); his colleague and collaborator **Toto Cutugno** (7.07.1943 – 22.08.2023); **Peppino Gagliardi** (1940 – 2023), and one of the most successful Italian songwriters and performers internationally - **Eros Ramazzotti** (28.10.1963).

4.6. Scandinavian countries

In the Scandinavian countries, the most commonly used name for the so-called “poets with a guitar” is the nickname “troubadour”. The descendants of the ancient skalds in these countries are many and their revival began as early as the beginning of the 20th century. With one exception: already in the 18th century, the Swedish poet Bellman became perhaps the most significant figure of the transition between the image of the medieval troubadour, bard or minnesinger and that of the “modern troubadour”.

Carl Michael Bellman (4.02.1740 – 15.02.1795) was a Swedish poet, songwriter, singer and musician. He occupies a central place in the Swedish song tradition and is often referred to as the “national skald” of Sweden. Notable among Bellman's works are the collections *Fredman's Songs* and *Fredman's Messages*, each of which contains 70 songs. Many of these songs are still popular today.

Evert Axel Taube (12.03.1890 – 31.01.1976) was a Swedish singer, songwriter, composer and artist. He was one of Sweden's most respected musicians and is considered the greatest troubadour of the Swedish ballad in the 20th century. His songs “Calle Schewens vals” (“The Waltz of Calle Schewen”), “Fritiof och Carmencita” (“Fritjof and Carmencita”), “Flickan i Havanna” (“The Girl from Havana”), “Så skimrande var aldrig havet” (“The sea has never shone like this) are known throughout Scandinavia. Evert Taube holds an honorary doctorate in philosophy from the University of Gothenburg and is a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music.

Cornelis Vreeswijk (8.08.1937 – 12.11.1987) was a singer-songwriter, poet and actor, born in IJmuiden, the Netherlands. At the age of 12 he emigrated to Sweden with his parents. Vreeswijk released 25 studio and 7 live albums in Sweden and 7 in the Netherlands, as well as several volumes of poetry. Songs such as „Ångbåtsblues” (“Steamboat blues”), “Turistensklagan” (“Tourist Lament”), “Veronica”, “Cecilia Lind” and many others remain forever in the golden fund of songwriting. Cornelius Wrestrvig is considered one of Sweden's greatest troubadours, although he never managed to obtain Swedish citizenship.

Alf Prøysen (23.07.1914 – 23.11.1970) was a writer, poet and one of Norway's most distinguished performers and songwriters. He recorded his first record in 1947 and subsequently

released 30 more albums of his songs. Many of these were performed in the local dialect of his birthplace. By the end of his life, Prøyssen had published several more books of poetry, written 15 books for children, starred in four musicals and a huge number of radio and television shows. He is a member of the Norwegian Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Other big names in the long list of contemporary Scandinavian troubadours are the Norwegians **Erik Bye** (1926 – 2004), **Lillebjørn Nilsen**, **Åge Aleksandersen**, **Jan Eggum**, **Halvdan Sivertsen**, **Bjørn Eidsvåg**, **Finn Kalvik**; the Swedes **Ulf Lundell** and **Björn Afzelius** (1947 – 1999) and the extremely popular throughout Scandinavia Danish troubadour **Kim Larsen** (1945 – 2018).

4.7. Russia (The Soviet Union)

Against the background of the great Russian poets of the 18th – 19th centuries, a tradition of modern troubadours (or “bards” as they prefer to call them in Russia) practically began to emerge in the early 20th century. One of the most prominent representatives of troubadour song of this period was the great Alexander Vertinsky. Unfortunately, in the first decades after the October Revolution, the Bolshevik government severely restricted the free expression of creativity, which began to manifest itself again only during the years of World War II. The songs that emerged then, composed in dugouts and trenches, gave the first indications of a nascent individual songwriting. Another source is the songs of prisoners in the labour camps, some of whom managed to leave their confines and enter the secretive folklore of dissident circles. The tradition of the so-called “swamp” or “criminal songs” created at the end of the tsarist regime was revived. The first to publicly perform some of these songs were **Aleksandr Galich (Ginsburg)** (1918 – 1977), **Mikhail Ancharov** (1923 – 1990), **Bulat Okudzhava** (9.05.1924 – 12.06.1997), **Arkady Severny** (1939 – 1972), and **Vladimir Vysotsky** (25.01.1938 – 25.07.1980). They all developed their talent over time and began to create their own songs. In more recent times, the “poets with a guitar” **Oleg Gazmanov**, **Grigory Leps**, and **Nikolai Rastorguyev**, the frontman of the band Lyube (whose songs were written in collaboration with Igor Matvienko, Alexander Shaganov, and Mikhail Andreev), have enjoyed particular popularity in Russia.

Alexander Vertinsky (20.03.1889 – 21.05.1957) was a poet, composer and singer - one of the brightest stars of Russian and Soviet song in the first half of the 20th century. Born in Kyiv, he began his successful “pop” career in Moscow in 1915. After the outbreak of the October Revolution, he emigrated and toured Romania, Poland, Germany, France, and the United States. There he created songs such as “Tango Magnolia”, “Sophisticated Lady”, “Pani Irena”, “Madame, the leaves are already falling”, “Ballad of the Gray-Haired Lady”, “Sarasate's Concert”, “Matrosi” (“Sailors”), “In the Blue Distant Ocean”, “The Brazilian Cruiser”, “Nativity” and many more. Vertinsky returned to the USSR in the autumn of 1943. His work influenced all subsequent Soviet bards.

Bulat Shalvovich Okudzhava (9.05.1924 – 12.06.1997) was a Soviet poet, writer, musician, singer and songwriter, of Georgian origin. He was one of the greatest stars of the so-called “author's song” in the Soviet Union. His songs are a mixture of Russian poetry, folk elements and the style of French chansons. Although not politically oriented, Okudzhava's songs brought a freshness to the song culture of the Soviet Union and precisely because of this “otherness” he was quite closely watched by the authorities, who often accused him through their professional critics of the “infantilism” of his work. Bulat Okudzhava wrote 5 historical novels, starred in a number of films, writing the screenplays for 4 of them, and published 11

collections of poetry and songs. He is the author of more than 200 songs, including “Our Tenth Landing Battalion”, “Your Worship”, “A Midnight Trolleybus”.

Vladimir Semyonovich Vysotsky (25.01.1938 – 25.07.1980) was a Soviet actor, poet, writer and singer-songwriter who had a strong and lasting influence on Russian culture. Vysotsky was the author of more than 100 poems, 600 songs and one poem for children, as well as many songs written specifically for movies. During his lifetime, he released 7 song albums and starred in 28 films. According to a public opinion poll in Russia about “The idols of the 20th century”, Vladimir Vysotsky is the second most popular after Yuri Gagarin.

4.8. Central and Eastern Europe, Balkans

Already in the first decades of the 20th century, poets and singers, who accompanied their songs with a guitar, appeared throughout Central and Eastern Europe. This phenomenon manifested itself particularly vividly in the second half of the century - in the period of the Cold War, when both the propagandists of socialist ideas and the bards of nascent dissidence found a fertile ground for expressing their positions and feelings.

In the former **East Germany**, **Wolf Biermann** (b. 1936) gained such popularity with his anti-regime songs that the authorities were forced in 1976 to exile him to West Germany, where he continued his brilliant career. At the same time, in East Germany (or the GDR, as it was officially called), US citizen **Dean Reed** (1938 – 1986) gained immense popularity with his songs criticizing the Western order, the Vietnam War and the arrival of the Pinochet military regime in Chile.

In **Poland** during the tumultuous eighties and nineties of the last century, the guitar poet **Jacek Kaczmarski** (1957 – 2004) became one of the pillars of the Solidarity movement. After the introduction of martial law in the country, he was forced to emigrate. Returned after the fall of the regime, he performed a concert activity enjoying enormous success. Subsequently, he gradually became disillusioned with the way the changes were carried out and emigrated to Australia.

In **Czechoslovakia**⁶, the popular poet and country singer **Karel Kryl** (1944 – 1994), along with poets such as Vaclav Havel, was among the main critics of the invasion after the Prague Spring in 1968. Forced to emigrate, he continued to write songs and release records. Although his records were banned in Czechoslovakia, people illegally distributed copies of his songs. Returning to his homeland after the success of the “Gentle Revolution” and the changes in 1989, Kryl, true to his sense of justice, began to criticize the newly emerging weaknesses of the country's young democracy.

Parallel to the flourishing of rock and pop music in the second half of the 20th century in the former Socialist Federal Republic of **Yugoslavia**, the activity of singer-poets also flourished. Unforgettable songs were created by the Croatian singer and pianist of the band “The Dubrovnik Troubadours” (“Dubrovački trubaduri”) **Oliver Dragojević** (1947 – 2018), the creator and main songwriter of the cult band “Riblja Čorba” **Bora Džordžević** (b. 1952), the unforgettable lyricist **Djorđe Balasević** (1953 – 2021), the virtuoso guitarist and bard from Skopje **Vlatko Stefanovski** (b. 1957), author of the famous and very popular “Gypsy song”.

Djorđe Balasević (Đorđe Balašević) was born in the city of Novi Sad on May 11, 1953. Before graduating from university, he devoted himself to a musical career, taking part in the rock group “Žetva” (“Harvest”) and a little later he left it and founded his band “Rani

⁶ Existed as a country in the period 1918-1992 and then divided into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

Mraz“ (“Early frost”). Apart from his band, Balasevic also wrote songs for many other Yugoslav pop and rock stars. In 1982, he released his first solo album “Pub” (jack, knave). A brilliant solo career and a countless number of concerts followed. Ten more albums of wonderful songs were released over the next years. Djorje Balasevic died on 19.02.2021 as a result of complications after suffering from Covid. Two of his albums (“Abyss” and “Pub”) are among the hundred most successful Yugoslav albums of all time.

The homeland of the ancient aoidoi and rhapsodes, today's **Greece** also has its popular and extremely successful poets-singers with a guitar. Such are **George Dalaras** (born 29.09.1949) and **Nikos Vertis** (born 21.08.1976). Both enjoy fame far beyond the borders of Greece. The main theme of their songs is human relationships, love. In the songs they use both folk elements based on the Phrygian mode, typical for the Greek music, and modern rock sound. It is characteristic of both of them (as well as of many of their contemporary colleagues in the West) that at their concerts, given to audiences of many thousands, they are accompanied by a large orchestra, often containing several additional guitar players.

4.9. Bulgaria

Perhaps the first Bulgarian “troubadours” were the so-called “guslars”. For centuries, there has been a tradition in the country, of folk singer-poets going around the villages and telling in a song form, accompanying themselves on the *gusla*⁷, legends about folk heroes, glorious kings and victories, about outlaws, love, torments and joys. This (perhaps) thousand-year-old tradition was preserved until the first decades of the nineteenth century, when, as a result of the Russo-Turkish wars, hopes for independence from the Ottoman Empire were growing among the Bulgarian population in the Balkans. The first patriotic and then later – revolutionary songs appeared. In the beginning, their melodies were strongly influenced (or even borrowed) from the Russian, Ukrainian, Greek, Czech and the Turkish urban folklore. The first songbooks were printed. The lyrics of the songs touched on all aspects of the life and the emotions of the Bulgarians - from patriotic (“Where are you, faithful love of the people?” („Къде си, вярна ти любов народна“), “Rise up, You Balkan Hero” („Стани, стани, юнак балкански“), to melodramatic (“I wander on the sea” („По море се скитам ази“), “With a faithful oath I was deceived” („С вярна клетва ме измами“) and revelry (“Give me wine, innkeeper” („Вино дай, кръчмарю“). And so the fashion of the so-called “town songs” was created in Bulgaria.

It is important to note that expanding the range of the concept of “bard culture”, as mentioned above, from the middle and especially - the end of the 19th, as well as the first decades of the 20th century in Bulgaria was created a host of very talented poets such as Dobri Chintulov (1822 – 1886), Petko Rachev Slaveykov (1827 – 1895), Lyuben Karavelov (1843 – 1903), Pencho Slaveykov (1866-1912), Peyo Yavorov (1878-1913), Nikolay Liliev (1885 – 1960), Dimcho Debelyanov (1887 – 1916), Hristo Smirnenski (1898 – 1923), Elisaveta Bagryana (1893 – 1991). Their relay was continued by Geo Milev (1895 – 1925), Nikola Vaptsarov (1909 – 1942), Aleksander Vutimski (1919 – 1943), Valeri Petrov (1920 – 2014), Radoy Ralin (1922 – 2004) and others. And of course, the genius Hristo Botev (1848 – 1876) and the patriarch of Bulgarian literature Ivan Vazov (1850 – 1921) – both of them with exceptional and beloved poetic works (some of which became songs) - deserve a place at the top of this list.

⁷ Gusla - a bowed single-stringed musical instrument used in Bulgaria and some other Balcan countries.

After the communist coup of September 9, 1944, the conditions for the development of bardic culture understandably became very specific, and for about twenty years they were mostly limited to glorification of the Communist party and its heroes, as well as – the “brigadier movement”⁸. The undisputed peak of poetic creativity at that time was occupied by Penyo Penev (1930 – 1959).

Since the mid-1970s, the genre of “poets with guitars” has been gradually reawakening in Bulgaria. In 1975 the festival of the so-called political song “Scarlet Poppy” („Ален мак“) was held for the first time. After the changes in 1989 a real flowering of bardic creativity in Bulgaria took place, with numerous festivals being organized, such as “Poetic Strings” in the town of Harmanli, “Bardfest” in Lovech, “Sofia evenings of the author's song”, “Salty winds” in Burgas and many others. Among the most prominent Bulgarian bards are **Mikhail Belchev**, **Todor Traychev**, **Haygashod Agasyan**, **Nedyalko Yordanov**, **Georgi Minchev** (1943 – 2001), **Maria Neykova** (1946 – 2002), **Dimitar R. Valchev**, **Plamen Stavrev** (1953 – 2011), **Grisha Trifonov** (1955 – 2015), **Vasil Georgiev (Vasko – “the patch”)**, **Kiril Marichkov** from the rock band “Shturtsite” (The Crickets), and the unforgettable **Emil Dimitrov** (although the guitar was never his instrument). In recent years **Maria Mutafchieva** (Mary Boys Band), **Vladimir Ampov**, **Lyubomir Kirov** could be added to this list. To the group of contemporary bards can rightly be added the poets - authors of lyrics **Alexander Petrov**, **Miryana Basheva**, **Evtim Evtimov**, **Ilya Velchev**, **Pavel Matev**, **Bogomil Gudev**, **Zhivko Kolev**, **Volen Nikolaev**, **Stefan Tsanev** and many others.

For a number of reasons, the tradition of “poets with guitars” in Bulgaria dates back to the beginning of the 20th century and its first prominent representative was the talented and extremely popular for his time “coupletist”⁹ **Stoyan Milenkov**. Almost at the same time, the young Romanian artist **Jacob Goldstein** (known in Bulgaria by the pseudonym “**Jib**”) settled in Bulgaria and also achieved great popularity thanks to the topical and spirited poems and songs he created and performed (at the beginning - translated from Romanian, and later - written in Bulgarian). To the group of Bulgarian early “troubadours” should be also added the names of: the talented songwriter and performer **Albert Pincas** (it is not certain whether he used a guitar, but this is very likely as he was an accomplished violinist); the Russian emigrant **Sergei Barteniev**; the Plovdiv singer **Constantin Bambov**; the famous guitarist and songwriter **Nikola Nikov**; the charming and unforgettable **Kliment Simeonov (Klimbona)** (1934 – 2017); the popular Plovdiv street-troubadour **Yordan Terziyski** (30.12.1945 – 7.09.2021).

Stoyan Milenkov (1889 – 1953) is considered the doyen of the troubadour tradition in Bulgaria. While still a student at the Second Men's High School in Sofia, he joined the student theatre troupe founded by the pioneer of Bulgarian cinema Vasil Gendov. Milenkov wrote poems, declaimed and sang, accompanying himself on the guitar, and his talent was appreciated by Ivan Vazov himself. In 1909 Milenkov went to Paris to study acting at the school of Charles Masset. Soon after his graduation in 1911, Milenkov returned to Bulgaria. He played roles at the National Theatre, but it was the stage of the “New Amerika Theatre” where he could perform as a troubadour and a coupletist, that attracted him most. Some of Stoyan Milenkov's most famous songs are “Count Zepellin just passed overhere”, “If I was a rich man's child”, “Thieves” („Апаши“), “Without competition” („Без конкуренция“), “Bargain” („Далавера“),

⁸ Brigadier movement - Organized state use of work brigades by young people (schoolchildren, students, soldiers) or workers and employees during the first decades of the communist regime in Bulgaria.

⁹ A coupletist, is a multifaceted artist who creates and performs witty satirical and (often) politically-charged songs, known as “couplets”.

“Ours are in power again” („Пак са нашите на власт“). He is the author of the libretto of the first Bulgarian operetta “Moralists”, the music of which was written by maestro Georgi Atanasov. In 1931 he was elected chairman of the Bulgarian Circus Artists' Organization. After September 9, 1944 he worked in Radio Sofia and the State Circus “Rodina”.

Jib (Jacob Goldstein) was born in Romania and settled in Bulgaria in 1919. He made his debut in the arena of the circus “Bulgaria”. Jib gained great popularity and became a sought-after performer on the stages of all Bulgarian salons, cabarets and circuses. An exceptional improviser, he arranged and sang his couplets in a way that touched the hearts of every layer of his large audience. Some of his most popular songs are “I am Gosho - the awesome” („Аз съм Гошо-хубавеца“), “I have sent my wife to a resort”, “When you see someone young limping without reason” („Щом видиш някой млад да куца без да иска“). After 9.9.1944 he settled in Israel where he contributed to the newspaper of the Bulgarian Jews with anecdotes written in Bulgarian.

Albert Pinkas (1897 – 1967) was born in Ruse (then Ruschuk). His humorous lyrics and the fresh melodies of his songs enjoyed great popularity among the Bulgarian public. In 1930 he signed a contract with the major record companies London Records and Columbia and released a large number of small records which were snapped up by his fans. In 1931 Pinkas also founded his own record company (Lifa Records) with a factory which was nationalized and renamed Balkan in 1947. Later the factory, united with three other related companies gave birth to the well-known record company “Balkanton”. Some of his most popular original songs are: “Two Female Neighbours” („Две съседки“), “A Mandolin Chime”, “The White Birches”, “The Old Bachelor”, “The State Lottery”. After the start of the Second World War Pinkas emigrated to Italy where he remained until the end of his life in 1967.

Sergei Barteniev - was an emigrant from Russia who recited and sang his couplets to Bulgarian audiences in the first decades of the 20th century. Unfortunately, not much information about his biography has reached us.

Nikola Nikov (1914 – 2000) was one of the doyens of the guitar in Bulgaria, but most people do not know that he was also a troubadour. His musical talent developed in many ways as a songwriter and performer - alone and with his “Trio Nicky” with whom he made numerous recordings and tours both in Bulgaria and abroad. In addition to his composing and performing activities, Nicky Nikov published guitar schools, taught in the community music network of Bulgaria, and in the period 1970-71 he was also a lecturer at the Bulgarian State Conservatory.

Asparuh Leshnikov - Ari (28.07.1897 – 31.07.1978) studied vocal mastery in the class of prof. Ivan Vulpe. In 1922 Ari went to Germany where he entered the Berlin Conservatory. In 1927 he became a soloist of the “Charell-Revue chorus”, and a little later he was also accepted into the newly formed sextet “Comedian Harmonists”, which managed to gain great popularity very quickly, and Leshnikov was proclaimed the “Knight of the “Upper F”. He returned to Bulgaria in 1941 and had a successful solo career, recording over 100 gramophone singles. Also notable was Leshnikov's collaboration with the brilliant poet Hristo Smirnenski, which resulted in the wonderful song “Bitter Coffee”, based on the poet's lyrics and the singer's music. The years after the Ninth of September 1944 proved difficult for the artist. He lived in obscurity and deprivation, but in the late 1960s attention to him returned. Balkanton issued a long-playing record of his old recordings, as well as another with recordings of the Comedian Harmonists. For his 80th birthday, Asparuh Leshnikov was awarded the Order of Cyril and Methodius. Soon afterwards he died - in complete poverty.

Emil Dimitrov (23.12.1940 – 30.03.2005) is one of the greatest names of Bulgarian “pop” music of the 20th century. In 1960 he debuted on the music scene with his song

“Harlequin”. Songs such as “My Country”, “Our Signal”, “Goodbye Maria”, “Julia”, “Only One Life” followed, which won him fame in the East bloc countries as well as in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. He gave a huge number of concerts at home and abroad, the circulation of his records was incomparable to what was known before for a Bulgarian pop singer. Emil Dimitrov has more than 280 original songs, released more than 30 albums, performed more than 7000 concerts at home and abroad. He is called “The King of Bulgarian pop music”.

Nedyalko Yordanov is one of the most significant contemporary Bulgarian bards. He was born in Burgas on 18 January 1940. He is a brilliant poet, playwright, director, composer and singer. He is the author of the lyrics of some of the most beloved Bulgarian songs, such as “Youth is Going”, “Don't Grow Old, Love”, “The Boy Who Talks to the Sea”. Nedyalko Yordanov has performed over 1500 concerts all over Bulgaria and abroad. His enormous oeuvre includes (besides poetry) theatre plays, journalism, books for children, film scripts, the musical “I'll Make You Fall in Love”.

Georgi Minchev (1943 – 2001) is one of the symbols of contemporary Bulgarian bard-culture. He was a member of the first rock group in Bulgaria – “Bandaratsite”. In 1968 he won the first prize at the Golden Orpheus festival with the song “White Silence” performed together with the rock band “Shturtsite”. In the period 1968 - 69 he worked with the rock band – “Silver Bracelets”. At that time he recorded his best songs. His version of Dave Dudley's “Six Days on the Road” sung in Bulgarian as “Blessed Years” is also popular. After the democratic changes in 1989 Georgi Minchev developed an active activity as a typical troubadour - performing many of his songs not only in concert halls, but also at rallies and squares. Some of his most famous songs created after 1989 are “Story with Guitar”, “Bulgarian Reggae”, “Alone at the Bar”. In memory of Georgi Minchev every year in Sofia is held the rock festival “Flower for Goshu”.

Kiril Marichkov was born in Sofia on 30.10.1944. He is a bass player, composer, singer, lyricist, co-founder (in 1967) of the rock band “Shturtsite” (“The Crickets”) together with the guitarists Veselin Kisiov and Petar Gyuzelev, and the drummer Petar Tsankov. The band's first success came with winning the First Prize at the Golden Orpheus Festival with the song “White Silence” sung by Georgi Minchev. Many more recordings and released records followed, as the author of the music of many of the songs was Kiril Marichkov. Some of his original songs are. By 2008 “Shturtsite” released 18 records. Kiril Marichkov released two solo albums. His song “Oath” („Клетва“) from the popular feature film “Yesterday” (1987) became very popular. In 2013 Kiril Marichkov together with Dobrin Vekilov (Donny), Ivan Lechev, Slavcho Nikolov and Venko Poromanski created the super group “The Formation”.

Maria Neykova (21.12.1945 – 1.08.2002) was born in Plovdiv. She graduated from the Academy of Music and Fine Arts in Plovdiv, and later – The Pop Music Faculty of the Bulgarian State Conservatory. In 1968 she became a soloist of the “Sofia Orchestra”, and in the following 1969 in a duet with Mikhail Belchev she received the first prize at the Golden Orpheus Festival with the song “Late Encounters” („Закъснели срещи“). She composed about 100 pop songs, the most famous of which is “Do two go?” („Вървят ли двама“) from the motion picture “The Goat's Horn”. Maria Neykova won the Melody of the Year competition with the song “Good Evening, Good Night”, and the following year in 1973 she won second prize at the Golden Orpheus Festival with her song “I Have Land”. Her 1980 song “The World is Made for Two” sung by Orlin Goranov remains as a timeless evergreen. Maria Neykova is also a composer of music for theatre plays and films, and can rightly be called a woman-troubadour, taking a worthy place in the list of her illustrious colleagues.

Mikhail Belchev was born in Sofia on 13.08.1946. His most famous song is “The Boulevard” from 1976, dedicated to Sofia and the “Ruski” Boulevard. It was the first song from his highly successful second long-playing record “Double” („Двойник“), released the same year.

Belchev received first prizes at the Golden Orpheus competition in 1969, 1984, 1990 and 1998, and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996. Among the most beloved songs performed by the great troubadour are: “Youth is Going”, “Double”, “Don't Grow Old, Love”, “Late Love”, “Good Acquaintances”. Belchev is the author of the lyrics of “Tn Years Afte” and “We will embrace again” of the popular Bulgarian progressive-rock band FSB, “Are you ready for love” of Lili Ivanova, “I will keep singing” by Yordanka Hristova, “Mother” of Georgi Hristov, “For you, Bulgaria” of Veselin Marinov.

Todor Traychev was born on 28.01.1950 in Sofia. He gained fame in a duo with his wife Mariana. The duo Mariana and Todor Traychev became popular in the late seventies when they both sang and accompanied themselves with acoustic guitars.. The lyrics of their songs were written in the spirit of the time - with themes both life and patriotic, according to the political conjuncture, and the music and arrangements were often made by Todor Traychev. The duo was one of the main participants in the “political song” festival – “Scarlet Poppy” („Ален мак“). Some of their most famous songs are “Sunny Lady”, “I Want to Paint You”, “Age”, “News”, “Song for Mitko Palauzov”. At the end of 1983 the family emigrated to the USA. A few years later, the duo broke up. After his return to Bulgaria, Todor Traychev continued to perform as a troubadour, but could not reach the success he had in a duo with Mariana.

Haygashod Agasyan – Haygo is one of our most popular and beloved troubadours in the last few decades. He was born on 28.01.1953 in Varna. Graduated from the Bulgarian State Conservatory with a specialty - viola. He is the author of the music of songs such as “Don't grow old, love”, “Good acquaintances”, “Spring”, “From very, very far away”, “Prayer”, “Bohemian song”.

Plamen Stavrev – Flame (1953 – 2011) was born in Burgas. In 1977 he recorded his first original song “Prayer” based on the text by Dimitar Metodiev. He followed his career abroad, where, along with the writer of these lines (Nikolay Cheynov), Plamen became one of the first two Bulgarian professional troubadours to successfully perform in the West. In the early 1990s Plamen Stavrev returned to Bulgaria and developed concert activity mainly in his hometown of Burgas. He is one of the organizers of the Burgas Blues Fest. In 2001 he won the first prize and the audience award at the “Burgas and the Sea” competition for his performance of the song “Summer” (t. Ivan Valev , m. Grisha Trifonov). Plamen Stavrev recorded three albums: “A Black Man in Alabama” (1993), “A memory of love” (2004) and “Siamese Twin” (2005). Besides “Summer”, other landmark songs recorded by Plamen are “Nativity” (t. Peyo Pantelev), “Return” (t. Zhivko Kolev), “The Hill with the Crazy Grass”, “Tomorrow”, “African-American in Alabama”, “Siamese Twin”, “Cup of Coffee” – in a duo with Toni Dimitrova (m. and t. Stefan Diomov), “It’s a Day Outside” (t. Grisha Trifonov, m. Stefan Diomov).

Dimitar R. Valchev was born in 1954 in Sofia. One of the most outstanding members of the vocal-instrumental group “Formation May”. In co-authorship with Borislav Donchev, Dimitar Valchev wrote the music for the first Bulgarian rock show “Meeting with Rama” (based on the novel by Arthur Clarke), presented by “Formation May” in 1981. Significant is his participation in the cult studio-band “Zhar” („Жар“) together with the talented musicians Jerry Behar and Valery Gradinarsky. The group's song “Rain” (t. Georgi Dzhagarov, m. Dimitar R.

Valchev) is considered one of the greatest Bulgarian pop songs. Other wonderful songs created by Valchev are: “The Road”, “I miss you” (recorded with the group “Zhar”), “Light (Why are you here?)”, “Bridge” (t. Grisha Trifonov), “Temple”, “White shirt, black rose” (t. Grisha Trifonov), “Close” (recorded with “Zhar”), “Rain on a summer day” (recorded with “Zhar”), “Single” („Единак“) (t. Grisha Trifonov), and his last hit from 2023 – “Sin” and “Fear”.

Grisha Trifonov (1955 – 2015) is one of our cult poets and troubadours who worked in the last decades. He was born in the south-central Bulgarian town Harmanli on 20.09.1955. Founder of the festival “Poetic Strings” in Harmanli. Has published six books of poetry and prose. Trifonov is the author of a number of beloved songs written from his own and other people's texts. His style is expressively romantic, reminiscent of some of Vladimir Vysotsky's songs. Among his most popular hits are: “Summer” (t. Ivan Valev), “Old Scandalous Love”, “Dangerous as Dynamite”, “A Cat in the Hat”, “Cities Where We Are Not to Find”, “Your Name”, “Dusty Love” (t. Kalin Donkov). In 2006 his album “Main Street” was released.

Vasil Svilenov Georgiev (Vasko – “the patch”) was born on 6.06.1959 in Sofia. He is known as the troubadour of the democratic changes in Bulgaria after 1989. He started his musical career as a drummer of the band Parallel 42 in 1984. In 1989 he founded his band „Poduene Blues Band“. This is where his career as a troubadour began. He started playing guitar and a blues harp - alone and as the frontman of his band. The songs he created and performed at rallies, squares and concert halls enjoyed great popularity. His lyrics are topical and his style inspired by Bob Dylan, Neil Young, and the Louisiana blues legends. Landmark songs from his period include “Communism Goes Away”, “Bureaucrat”, and “Dog of the End Neighborhood”. From the beginning of his career until now (2023) Vasko - “the patch” has released over 22 records and CDs. Among the most popular songs from them are. “Let There Be Light”, “Emigrants”, “Day After Day”, “No Beer”, “Night Butterflies”, “The Pipe of Peace”.

CONCLUSION

Having presented the various stages of historical development and all the varieties of what we now call troubadours or bards, it should be emphasized that this study has pointed out specific names and personalities who have contributed most to the enrichment of world culture and the prosperity of this profession (or vocation). It should be noted, however, that the army of these creators and artists is vast. Over the centuries, some have left a mark with their brilliant poems, others with their music, others with the magic of their performances. In order to present a complete picture of the “troubadour” phenomenon, both the background of this phenomenon and then the phenomenon itself, as well as the closest other professions that appeared later, were examined.

In **Chapter I**, the first representatives of the “author's song” in Western European culture are presented: the bards and the philid, the scopes and the scalds.

In **Chapter II** the actual troubadours are introduced: They are giving us the name and the concept “troubadour” which is still used today. The names and brief biographies of the most significant of them are given.

Chapter III tells the story of the trouvères who carried out the example of the Occitan troubadours in northern France, as well as the German-speaking minnesingers and the minstrels (who in many ways resemble modern professional troubadours-ententeurs). The jongleurs, vagantes and goliards are also told. A table has been compiled with the time distribution by centuries of all the main representatives of bard - troubadour culture in the past.

The extensive **Chapter IV** surveys the inexhaustible wealth and talent of the “modern troubadours” - singers and songwriters from Europe and America, the continents that have contributed most to the development of world culture in recent centuries.

The study contributes to a better understanding of the difference between the terms “troubadour” and “bard” in our times. Over the last fifty years, perhaps more, the two terms have been used casually as synonyms, and this has created some confusion. And the explanation is not difficult. Although during this period in different parts of the world the profession of the solo performer - a singer and musician who accompanies his songs with the guitar - has been called by both names, almost everywhere the old name of “troubadour” has already established itself. Russia and some countries of Eastern Europe (including Bulgaria), where the definition “bard” is more popular, are to some extent an exception in this sense. Today we could divide modern professional troubadours into two categories:

1. **Prominent professional troubadours** (such as Bob Dylan, Vladimir Vysotsky).
2. **Professional troubadours - entertainers** who perform in entertainment venues.

While for the first group some also use the term “bard”, for the second the established name in modern terms is always “troubadour”. Professional troubadours of the second group today perform both their own and other people's compositions, working as entertainers in clubs, bars, pubs, on cruise ships, etc. Some of them also use additional technical tools such as drum machines, sequencers, computers and so on, while others (usually the best) perform with just an acoustic guitar. However, it should be noted that, as pointed out in the section “Minstrels”, to a large extent the modern professional troubadours who work in entertainment establishments could be likened to their counterparts from the Middle Ages - the minstrels.

The term “bard” in its modern meaning could be divided into two types:

1. **bard** who is only a poet and is so called out of respect for his valuable work and
2. **bard** who creates both lyrics and music, and performs them himself in the form of a song.

It should also be noted that in contemporary language the terms “troubadour” and “bard” are sometimes used in a slightly negative sense - for example, when referring to a poet who sings the praises of an unpopular person, cause or organisation.

This study aims to present a comprehensive picture of the world and history of troubadours, their predecessors, contemporaries and followers. To the best of our knowledge, no one has ever done such a study and selection in such a broad historical scope. As a writer of these lines who has worked for decades as a professional troubadour, it was very interesting for me to explore and describe all aspects of this concept and of this very interesting profession. The original idea for this work included a chapter of advice to future professional troubadours. In the end it was decided that this was not necessary. Even without such advice, the reading of this PhD thesis will be beneficial to any future troubadour. It is enough even just to include in his repertoire the songs of the great “modern troubadours” of the 20th century cited in the study.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PHD THESIS (DISSERTATION)

1. This is the first time such an extensive (in historical range) study and selection have been made.
2. The most significant periods of the existence of bards, troubadours and their predecessors and followers in Europe and America from antiquity to the present are systematized and analyzed.

3. Timetables for the emergence, apogee and disappearance of the various representatives of bard culture over the centuries have been created, as well as orientation tables for the historical positioning of the different periods of the development of world culture.

4. The study points out the differences and formulates definitions of the contemporary meaning and understanding of the terms “troubadour” and “bard”.

5. The study can be used as a reference and a guide for information enrichment by every beginning or practicing professional troubadour.

More than 100 sources written in English, Russian, Spanish, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and Serbo-Croatian have been used in the study. They are reflected in the **bibliography** at the end of the text. A total of 141 sites used in the study are indicated in the **list of Internet-based sources**.

At the end of the abstract, I would like to express my immense gratitude to prof. Milena Shushulova, PhD for the trust and extremely valuable guidance I received from her, to my supervisor prof. Panayot Panayotov, PhD who gave me the idea for the dissertation topic. I would like to thank prof. Yavor Konov, PhD, ScD; prof. Ermila Schweitzer, PhD for their invaluable advice and support

I hope that the research will be useful and interesting to both professionals and lay readers.

PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE PHD THESIS TOPIC

1. “The troubadours - origin and contribution to Medieval culture”, In: Scientific Conference “Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance”, issue 10, NBU, 2016

2. “Stylistic peculiarities and characteristics in the work of trouvères, minnesingers, minstrels, jongleurs, goliards”, In: Scientific Conference “Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance”, issue 11, 2017

3. “The great troubadours of Scandinavia and their relationship to the European tradition”, In: Scientific Conference “Young Scientific Forum for Music and Dance”, in press.

Nikolay Cheynov was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1957. From the age of 8 he began to study guitar with maestro Simeon Simov. Alone and in a duo with guitarist Loreta Simova he won city competitions in classical guitar. The two of them participated in television programs. Nikolay Cheynov graduated with honours from the stage department of the Bulgarian State Conservatory in 1979. He taught guitar in the community school network in Sofia. In the late 70's Cheynov participated in the cult vocal-instrumental ensemble of Sofia University, "Collegium". Together with flutist Bistra Karafilova, he performed concerts for flute and classical guitar. In 1986 he settled in the Kingdom of Norway and developed a highly successful career as a troubadour, subsequently inspiring and training a host of Bulgarian troubadours. Cheynov has performed in Scandinavia, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere. In addition to the standard music performed by the professional troubadour-entertainers, he specialized in the music of Irish and Scottish song folklore. Nikolay Cheynov has recorded three CDs. In 2006 he returned to Bulgaria, but continued to travel abroad and pursue a career as a troubadour. In 2014 he graduated with honors as a Master of Music in the New Bulgarian University - specialty of Musical Art and Classical Instrument - Guitar, from the class of Prof. Dr. Panayot Panayotov. Since then Nikolay Cheynov has continued his work as a guitar lecturer at New Bulgarian University and Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". He speaks and writes English, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish and Serbo-Croatian.