


## Research Article

# Traditional perspectives and innovation in Albanian Folk musical instrument craftsmanship: the case study of Master Salla Shabani's Workshop in Gostivar

Bekim Ramadani<sup>1</sup>

*Faculty of Music, University of Tetova, Tetova, North Macedonia*

Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Submitted:</b> 11 February 2025 <b>Accepted:</b> 3 July 2025 <b>Online:</b> 30 September 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords</b> Albanian music culture Craftsmanship Folk musical instruments Musical instrument workshop Salla Shabani</p> <p>3023-7890/ © 2025 JTO Published by Genç Bilge (Young Wise) Pub.Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license.</p> 	<p>This study focuses on the analysis of traditional perspectives and innovation in Albanian folk musical instrument craftsmanship, with a particular emphasis on the workshop of master Salla Shabani from Gostivar. Using a wide range of methodologies, including detailed interviews, observations, and other field sources, we examine the history of musical instrument craftsmanship and its role in the context of Albanian culture. Furthermore, we analyze the impact of this craftsmanship on ceremonies, historical events, and the cultural identity of Albanians. In addition, we explore the effects of traditional musical instrument production techniques and innovation in this field, including the role of contemporary technology. By creating a complete portrait of Salla Shabani's biography, the aim of this study is to accurately understand the connection between craftsmanship, musical identity, and the dissemination of Albanian culture. In particular, we discuss the role of craftsmanship in preserving cultural diversity and promoting intercultural dialogue, and suggest possible steps for the continued preservation and promotion of the traditional musical instrument-making art in the future.</p>

## To cite this article:

Ramadani, B. (2025). Traditional perspectives and innovation in Albanian Folk musical instrument craftsmanship: the case study of Master Salla Shabani's Workshop in Gostivar. *Journal of Turkish Organology*, 2(2), 55-66. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1>

## Introduction

Craftsmanship (handicrafts) is a profession that requires special skills. From a historical perspective, it refers to non-industrial, small-scale production. Craftsmanship has a long history in many cultures and societies, extending from ancient times to the present. Artisans have specialized through techniques and skills transmitted from generation to generation.

An analysis of the historical development of folk musical instrument craftsmanship within Albanian culture forms a fundamental part of this study, as it provides the necessary historical and cultural context for understanding the role and evolution of this craft over time. In this section, the development process of folk musical instruments in Albanian culture will be examined in light of significant historical periods and cultural events that have influenced it. The analysis will begin with traditional musical instruments unearthed in the ancient and medieval periods in present-day Albanian territories.

There is considerable evidence concerning the musical culture of the Illyrians. Information about this culture appears in the works of Aristotle, Plutarch, Titus Livius, Cicero, Athenaeus, Thalloczy, Calenus, and Pliny, and most notably in the Bible, considered the oldest document. The Bible notes that the instrument known as *Sirta* was widely used from

<sup>1</sup> Dr., Faculty of Music, University of Tetova, Tetova, North Macedonia. Email: b\_ramadani@yahoo.com ORCID: 0009-0007-6108-1851

Babylon to Illyria in the ancient Babylonian Kingdom (4000 BCE), which possessed a deeply rooted culture. It is also recorded that “the Illyrians sang war songs accompanied by flute and bagpipe” (Thalloczy, 1916) and performed war dances with swords. The renowned French author and abbot Pierre Bauron (1888, p. 350) also emphasized the courage, patriotism, and peaceful relations of their ancestors with their neighbors in his works.

Furthermore, Aristotle (*Politics*, VII) advised his fellow citizens not to develop melodies played in the Phrygian mode (a modal scale consisting of two symmetrical tetrachords with a semitone between the 2nd–3rd and 6th–7th degrees), as this mode was considered one of the characteristics of Illyrian music and was performed on an instrument called *Bicurelja* (Gr. *Phrygian auloi*; Lat. *Tibiae phrygias*) (Ramadan Sokoli & Piro Miso, 1991, pp. 29–30).

In the 5th century, it was reported that Archbishop Jerome (Jerome) referred to dancers and rhythmic accompaniment using small metal instruments (*çamparet*) (Ankica Vitanova & Bekim Ramadani, 2014). The Runic Ocarina, a wind musical instrument from the Neolithic period, is considered the oldest musical instrument ever found in Kosovo. This artifact is a unique archaeological discovery not only for Kosovo but also for the entire region and beyond (Kraja, 2018, p. 1211).

One of the most significant instruments for Albanians from the Middle Ages to the present is the string instrument *lahuta*, used by highlanders to accompany epic songs from the *Kreshnikët Cycle*. During this period, Albanians also used other musical instruments such as idiophones (hammer, bell, cymbal, stone, tray), membranophones (drum, tambourine, pot, etc.), and aerophones (leaf, flute, *zurna*, etc.).

In ethnomusicology, a musical instrument is always evaluated with two distinct functions: as a tool for producing sound and as a tool for making music (Bose, *Ethnomusicology*, 2019, p. 91). Sound is the most important element in expressing the national code. For example, even if one plays motifs from Schubert’s symphonies on a *çifteli*, the timbre will still possess an authentically Albanian resonance (Ramadani; Adnan Aliu, renowned maker and performer of aerophone folk musical instruments, 2019, p. 30).

The Albanian people have inherited numerous musical instruments from their ancestors, remarkable in terms of craftsmanship, origin, usage, and expressive capabilities (Sokoli, 1991, p. 1). Many historical factors—migrations, the Ottoman occupation, and cultural interactions with other communities—have significantly influenced the formation and diversification of musical instruments. Before the Industrial Revolution (18th–19th centuries), craftsmanship was the primary mode of production. An exception to this was the manufacture-based production carried out with a more massive and organized division of labor, marking the transition from individual craftsmanship to the industrial era. Therefore, part of the blame for the disappearance of traditional crafts in our country may be attributed to this revolution (Penep, 2013).

In the late Ottoman period, many instruments such as *primi*, *karadyzeni*, *bugaria*, *gajda*, *surle*, and *davul* emerged. During the *Rilindja* (National Awakening) period, additional instruments such as *çifteli*, *sharki*, and various flutes were introduced.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, when examining the transformations and challenges faced by folk musical instrument craftsmanship in the context of globalization and general modernization, it becomes evident that Western-origin instruments such as mandolin, guitar, clarinet, *llautë*, violin, and accordion were incorporated into folk music ensembles. This development endowed Albanian folk music with both a new appearance and new content.

All these instruments, which have been part of Albanian folk musical culture for centuries, have undergone numerous transformations and changes in terms of construction, structure, timbre, and performance, adapting to the changing social and technological contexts.

### **The Role of Musical Instrument Craftsmanship in the Cultural Identity, Ceremonies, and Cultural Events of Albanian Regions**

An essential part of this study aims to understand the impact of musical instrument craftsmanship on the cultural and social life of Albanians through history and traditions. Some of these impacts include:

**Fulfilling ritual and ceremonial needs:** Traditional Albanian musical instruments are an important part of various ceremonies and rituals in community life. For example, the *lahuta* often accompanies war songs and other ceremonial events, creating depth and a unique atmosphere.

**Promotion of culture and cultural heritage:** Artisans who meticulously produce traditional instruments such as *lahuta*, *çifteli*, and *sharki* preserve ancient knowledge and ensure its transmission to future generations.

**Cultural identity and sense of belonging:** Traditional musical instruments are powerful symbols of Albanian identity. Their use in ceremonies and cultural events strengthens the sense of belonging and cultural bonds.

**Preservation of traditional skills:** The continuation of traditional manufacturing techniques helps preserve an important part of cultural heritage.

Musical instruments have played a vital role in human life throughout history and have been an inseparable part of warfare. A well-known anecdote illustrates this: Prince Nikola of Montenegro asked General Mark Milani, “How is it that you cannot defeat Malësia (the Highland region)?” Milani replied, “The Highlanders are very strong, very sensitive, very patriotic, and they are determined to defend their land at any cost. But there is something else... Their allies are the mountains and the *lahuta* players.” When Nikola asked, “Why the *lahuta* players?” the general responded, “Because when I kill one of their Highlanders, a *lahuta* player composes a song for him, and these songs inspire hundreds of other Highlanders to join the war” (as recounted by *lahuta* player Jonuz Delaj, Mema, 2018).

Music, song, dance, entertainment, weddings, etc., performed with traditional instruments have a stronger impact on both performers and listeners. What would a wedding be like without music? The original lyrics of the famous song *Bjeri gajdes gajdexhi* also convey this importance:

Nuk ka dasëm o, pa daulle,  
nuk ka valle o, pa valltar,  
ju këndonin edhe vallëzoni,  
sot kjo dasëm mos të pushoj!  
(Gazeta Telegraf, 2021)

There is no wedding, oh, without the drum,  
there is no dance, oh, without the dancer,  
you sing and you dance,  
may this wedding never stop today!  
(Gazeta Telegraf, 2021)

Musical instruments have also played a significant role in lament songs, from which *kaba*, a typical Albanian musical form, was born. According to legend, a dying woman asked her husband not to weep for her but instead to let the clarinet weep at the head of her coffin.

On the other hand, the *davul* (drum) and *surle* (shawm) have become indispensable components of weddings, celebrations, cultural events, and social gatherings. They are present at all types of assemblies, including sporting events. Therefore, the production of musical instruments contributes to the promotion and preservation of Albanian cultural heritage while reinforcing the sense of belonging and cultural identity.

### Techniques, Skills, and Tools in Traditional Musical Instrument Making

The production of traditional musical instruments involves specialized techniques, skills, and tools aimed at creating high-quality instruments with beautiful timbres. Some of these include:

**Material Selection:** The materials used in musical instruments are of vital importance in terms of their quality and sound. Artisans carefully select wood, metal, or other materials suitable for the type of instrument they intend to craft. For example, to make a traditional *lahuta*, it is essential to choose strong and high-quality wood such as walnut, cherry, ash, maple, or olive.

**Shaping and Carving:** Artisans possess specialized carving skills to shape materials into appropriate forms and sizes. This process involves using traditional wood or metalworking tools to create the instrument's form and details.

**Detail Work:** Musical instrument production also includes adding traditional motifs, decorations, or personal details to the instrument. These embellishments enhance the instrument's aesthetic value (e.g., serpent figures, goat motifs, portraits of Skanderbeg, or the national flag).

**Assembly and Fitting:** Once the instrument is shaped and detailed, artisans assemble all the necessary components to make it functional. This involves installing strings, bridges, pegs, bows, rods, vibrating components, and other essential elements.

**Testing and Refinement:** After completion, artisans test the instrument's quality and sound. If necessary, they make minor adjustments to ensure the instrument produces a pleasing and satisfying sound.

### Tools Used

*Burgija* (hand drill): for drilling wood.

*Sakica*: for cutting wood into different shapes.

*Keser* (adze): for cutting and carving wood.

Small hand saw: for more precise cutting and carving.

File: to make the wood more aesthetic and smooth.

*Rakon*: similar in function to a file, used for simpler shaping.

Sandpaper: for polishing and smoothing wooden products.

Tuning device: to determine the tuning and pitch range of the instrument.

Wood-cutting machines, specialized carving machines, engraving and decoration machines, etc.

### Innovations in Musical Instrument Craftsmanship

Innovation in musical instrument craftsmanship refers to the use of technology, new materials, and other methods to improve quality, performance, and user experience. Some examples include:

**New Materials:** Using modern materials instead of traditional ones. For example, alongside wood, lighter and more durable materials such as synthetic fiber or hard plastic may be preferred.

**Modern Technology and Equipment:** Modern devices such as CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machines allow for more precise carving and the creation of complex details.

**Innovation in Design and Form:** Original instruments can be designed in different shapes or with personalized details.

**Improving Performance and Sound Quality:** Sound quality can be enhanced by using special materials and acoustic techniques for components such as strings, bridges, pegs, vibrating parts, skins, and mouthpieces.

**Customization and Adaptation:** Offering users the ability to choose materials, shapes, and design details according to their preferences and needs.

### Traditional Musical Instrument Repertoire

The repertoire of traditional musical instruments belonging to the Albanian people is remarkably rich and diverse, manifesting itself across a wide spectrum of musical and social contexts. Through these instruments, three musical genres are expressed: epic, epico-lyric, and lyric—namely, epic and historical songs, love songs, songs of migration (*gurbet*), military songs (*nizam*), anniversary songs, and more. These instruments are also used to perform instrumental melodies such as *nibete* and *kaba*. Folk dances are likewise performed with their accompaniment. Imagine what the songs of the *Kreshnikët* epic, ballads, historical rhapsodies, songs of the *majekrabbu* type, and various traditional festivals would mean without folk musical instruments!

The use of traditional musical instruments belonging to the Albanian people varies according to musical style, genre, and cultural context. In some cases, these instruments are played solo, sometimes in pairs, and sometimes within ensembles to convey melodies and rhythms. Their repertoire can encompass a wide range of traditional songs and folk dances, as well as free improvisations that reflect the richness of Albanian folk music. Moreover, these instruments can be used in modern musical genres, adapting to styles such as pop, rock, or jazz. Thus, the repertoire of these instruments is vast and diverse, offering not only a rich variety of sounds and musical expressions but also a wide range of emotions.

### Research Aim

This research aims to determine the role and importance of Albanian folk musical instrument craftsmanship in our culture by analyzing both traditional perspectives and innovation in this field. To this end, the workshop of master

craftsman Salla Shabani from Gostivar is examined, focusing on the traditional production techniques of folk musical instruments, the impact of innovation, and their place in the cultural identity of the Albanian people.

### Research Questions

- What is the role of folk musical instrument craftsmanship in preserving Albanian cultural identity?
- What are the traditional production techniques of folk musical instruments in Albanian culture?
- What is the impact of innovation on the production and development of folk musical instruments?
- How can the history of folk musical instrument craftsmanship in the Gostivar region be defined?
- What are the unique characteristics of master Salla Shabani's workshop?
- How has Salla Shabani's craftsmanship influenced the production and promotion of folk musical instruments?
- How have folk musical instruments been used in ceremonies, historical events, and cultural activities in the Gostivar region?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for the future of folk musical instrument craftsmanship among Albanians?
- How can folk musical instrument craftsmanship contribute to intercultural dialogue and the promotion of cultural diversity in Macedonia?

### Method

#### Interview with Master Salla Shabani

A fundamental part of this study consists of a detailed interview with Salla Shabani, a renowned craftsman in the production of traditional Albanian folk musical instruments. This interview provides a detailed understanding of production processes, traditional techniques, and innovations in craftsmanship.

#### Observation and Analysis of Other Sources

In addition to the interview, this study also includes the observation and analysis of other sources related to folk musical instrument craftsmanship in Albanian culture. These sources include previous research, documents, and online databases on local craftsmanship.

### Findings

#### Biography of Salla Shabani

Salla Shabani was born on February 9, 1947, in the village of Strajan in Gostivar. It would be impossible to grow up in a home where song and authentic folk music flowed like an inexhaustible source and not preserve the treasure of folk culture. He began his involvement in folkloric music activities at the age of seven, first by playing the *kaval* and immersing himself in the melodies of folk music.



**Photo 1.** Salla Shabani interview video

The place where Salla Shabani was born is known as a cradle of folk music, where traditional musical culture has been preserved for centuries. His father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and many other family members across generations were producers of folk instruments. At the age of 8–9, he began playing the *çifteli* and *sharki*; at 10–11, he started playing the *kaval* and *gajda*. At 12–13, he attempted for the first time to produce some wind instruments (*kaval* and *gajda*),

and from the age of 14, he began making *çifteli*, *sharki*, and *kaval*. He inherited all these instrument-making skills from his father Lazami and his uncle Fejzulla Shabani, who were considered living legends of the *kaval* at the time.



**Video 1.** Salla Shabani, Master of Musical Instruments (Flaka, 2017, November 6)

He continued producing folk instruments until 1968, when he migrated to Germany for work and became a construction master. However, his love for folkloric music never diminished; in foreign lands, he invented a *kaval* titled *girnata*. A few years later, he developed a side-blown *kaval* with two scales that could be played from both ends. Until 1976, he both worked in construction in Germany and produced original folk instruments.

In 1976, he returned to his homeland and continued his craftsmanship. His passion for folk music did not end after returning from abroad; on the contrary, it continued with new inventions. In 1977, he invented a five-function *kaval* with additional components; in 1978, another *kaval* that could be played both as a *kaval* and a *gajda*. In 1979, he developed a wind instrument combining a *kaval* and a whistle-flute that could be played in the same scale. In 1980, he created a *kaval* with a whistle for beginners and a two-tone *kaval* with three scales; and in 1981, he developed a double-ended *kaval* with eight functions and additional components.

He continued producing these instruments until 1992, when he invented four types of curved-end *kaval*. He also developed a double-ended, dual-function cane. In 1994, he created a four-function, double-ended cane, and in 1998, a *kaval* with additional notes made from *girnata* parts. He continued producing traditional folk instruments until 2012, when he invented a six-function tempered *çifteli*.

As a producer of wind and string instruments (*çifteli*, tempered *çifteli*, *sharki*, *prima*, *karadizena*, all types of *kaval*, side flutes, whistle flutes, double-tone flutes, ocarinas, *surle*, double-tone *zurna*, *gajda*, *rake-take*, *gëreza*, *rëkeza*, etc.), Salla Shabani opened a new chapter in Albanian organology. In his own words, musical folklore is the strongest and most meaningful source of inspiration in his life (Bekim Ramadani & Florent Iseini, 2016).

Salla Shabani has performed with the following artists: Shefket Ismani (2020, 2022, Topestrada TV Tetova); Rizvan Sinani (2016, 2020, Alb Sound Production); Adnan Aliu (2012 Red Media, 2013 Uskanaify, 2017 Muzikë & Film Shqip); Emin Xhaferi (2013, 2022 Muzikë & Film Shqip); Hanife Sejfulla Reçani (2014 R.I.P.); Vëllezërit Dervishi (2004, 2013 BeniProduction); Vëllezërit Sejdiu (2014); Roven Hoti (2016); Izmit Salihu (2018 Televizioni Globi); Revajete Fazliu (2016); Lumturie Axhami (2016); Vëllezërit Limani (2014); Arif Madana (2016); Sevd Malsia (2016); Mejreme Kurti (1993 and 2014).

### Participation in Television Programs

Salla Shabani has participated in various television programs, including:

- *Oda Kërçovare* (MUZIKE & FILM SHQIP, 2021) (BeniProduction, Vëllezërit Dervishi - Shkurte Vogel [Oda Kërçovare, TV Gurra] | *Këngë Kërçovare*, 2013)
- *Nga tradita* (TOPESTRADA TV Tetova, 2017; 2019; 2021 [twice])
- *Rreth oxhakut* (*Iso iso*, 2021)
- *Rrënjët tona* (Media, *Melodi me Gajde* - Salla Shabani, 2012) (Media, Salla Shabani - *Melodi me Kavall*, 2012) etc.

### Awards, Honors, and Diplomas

Over the past 25 years, Salla Shabani has been highly active in folk music festivals and has been recognized with numerous awards, honors, and diplomas.

- In 2002, he received the “Veteran of Folklore” award at the Kaçanik Festival.
- In 2004, he was awarded a diploma for his valuable contributions at the national festival held in Gjirokaštër.
- In 2006, he received a diploma for Best Melody at the “Sharri Këndon” festival.
- In the same year, he was honored with the “Golden Plaque” award on the 35th anniversary of the AKVP “BESA” organization in Gostivar.

### Artistic Activities

His intense artistic activities are also connected with the ensemble AKVP “BESA” in Gostivar, with which he has participated in various performances, presentations, events, and festivals. With this ensemble, he was awarded the “Career Diploma” at the “Sharri Këndon” Festival in 2007, and in 2008 he received the diploma for “Best Performer on the Kaval” in the “Malësia e Madhe” region of Montenegro. In July 2010, he won the “Best Melody of the Festival Performed with the Kaval” award at the “Këngë Jeho” Festival in Struga. In May 2011, he participated in the “Hasi Jehon” Folklore Festival in Kosovo and was recognized as a “Distinguished Instrumentalist.” In June 2011, he received the “Most Original Performer” award at the traditional “Sharri Këndon” folklore festival.

On July 16, 2011, he participated in the “Shepherds’ Festival” in Galičnik, and on August 31, 2011, he was named “Best Artist with the Kaval” at the “Kandilat e Bajramit” Festival in Skopje. On November 26, 2011, at the “Besa” Folk Songs and Dances Ensemble in Gostivar, he received the title “Veteran of Folklore” on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. On June 8, 2012, he was awarded “Best Instrumentalist on the Kaval” at the “Pece Atanasovski” Festival held in the city of Prilep (Dollnen). In the same month, he participated in the “Sharri Këndon” festival and, together with his ensemble, won the “Best Orchestra of the Festival” award. On April 13–14, 2013, he participated in the national typological folklore festival held in Lezhë and won the award for “Best Performer on the Kaval and Ney.”

On July 7, 2013, he received two awards at the 39th “Pece Atanasovski” National Festival held in Prilep: the “19th Century Plaque” for his invention of the six-function *çifteli* and the “Career Diploma on the Kaval.” From May 22–29, 2013, he participated in the “Revyal Festival De Saint – Florent Le – Vieil” International Traditional Festival in Paris, France. From August 16–18, 2013, he participated in the “Rapsha 2013” National Folklore Festival in Montenegro and was awarded the “Career Diploma.” In 2014, he once again won first place at the “Pece Atanasovski” Festival, earning the title of “Best Musician.”

In 2015, he participated in the National Folklore Festival held in Gjirokaštër from May 10–16, where he presented his three-function cane and double-tone *kaval*, and received the “Career First Prize” for his significant contributions to innovation, production, and craftsmanship in folk musical instruments. In the same year, he won the “Diploma and Pece Atanasovski Statue” awards at the “Pece Atanasovski” Festival. He also participated in the “Rreze Mali” - Bistër Festival, Argjiro Fest-On (*Gazeta Shqip*, 2015), and the national typological folklore festival in Lezhë (*Gazeta Metro*, 2016).

In July 2024, during the 50th anniversary of the “Pece Atanasovski” Festival of folk instruments and songs held in Prilep and Dollneni, he received two awards (“Plaque” and “Certificate of Appreciation”). In August 2024, he received a “Certificate of Appreciation” from Valbon Limani, Mayor of Gostivar, and Namik Durmishi, President of the Municipal Council, for his “long-term work and dedication to Albanian ethno-organology.”

Salla Shabani continues to contribute to the production and performance of musical instruments through technical and tonal innovations. His talent is not limited to wind instruments but also extends to string instruments. He possesses extraordinary talent in the field of traditional culture. His activities also encompass the pedagogical field, as he has lovingly passed on the art of playing the *kaval* to four *kavalists* — Hanif Demiri, Emin Xhaferi, Adnan Aliu, and Valon Aliu — who are interested in folk music and follow in his footsteps. These musicians have also participated in many folk music festivals (Flaka, 2017).



## Conclusion

The analysis and interpretation of the research findings offer a profound perspective on the impact of musical instrument craftsmanship on Albanian culture, addressing the fundamental questions of the study and reflecting on the conclusions drawn. The following key points have emerged:

### Impact on Cultural Identity

The research demonstrates that musical instrument craftsmanship has played a crucial role in the formation of Albanian cultural identity. The creation and performance of these instruments have been a fundamental aspect of the life of the Albanian people, instilling in them a deep sense of connection with their cultural heritage.

### Creation of Cultural Bonds

Musical instrument craftsmanship has contributed significantly to the establishment and preservation of profound cultural bonds between generations. Through the transmission of traditional knowledge and techniques, masters such as Salla Shabani have facilitated the preservation of cultural heritage and promoted intergenerational dialogue.

### Role in Festivals and Cultural Events

Traditional musical instruments produced by masters like Salla Shabani have become an integral part of festivals, museums, and cultural events. As representatives of cultural heritage, these instruments have contributed to the promotion of Albanian culture on both local and international stages.

### Impact of Innovation and Technology

The findings reveal that musical instrument craftsmanship is in a constant state of evolution, incorporating innovations in production techniques and the use of modern technology. While these developments have led to changes in the characteristics and performance of musical instruments, they have also enabled the preservation of authenticity and cultural heritage.

### Contribution of Salla Shabani

The analysis of the findings demonstrates that Salla Shabani's contribution to the field of musical instrument craftsmanship is extraordinary. By blending traditional knowledge with innovation and a passion for culture, he has profoundly influenced the development of this field and left a lasting mark on Albanian art and cultural history.

The summary of the results obtained in this study provides a broad perspective on the core findings and significant conclusions presented. Some of these results include:

### The Role of Craftsmanship in Preserving Cultural Heritage

As presented in this study, musical instrument craftsmanship occupies an extremely important place in preserving and promoting Albanian cultural heritage. Through the practices of masters such as Salla Shabani, traditional techniques and cultural knowledge are transmitted from generation to generation.

### The Impact of Innovation in Traditional Craftsmanship

The introduction of innovation and modern technology has influenced musical instrument craftsmanship in terms of production techniques and the materials used. However, these changes are not contrary to tradition; rather, they contribute to the preservation and development of the craft.

### The Role of Craftsmanship in Cultural Identity

Albanian folk musical instruments are an integral part of the depth of Albanian cultural identity. These instruments not only shape traditional music but also represent an essential part of cultural identity and national history.

### Salla Shabani's Individual Contribution and Dedication to Cultural Heritage

Salla Shabani's biography represents a remarkable journey in the field of musical instrument craftsmanship. His contribution to the creation and preservation of this cultural heritage is extraordinary and serves as a model for the future. One of the individuals who continues this craft with great dedication is undoubtedly his compatriot Adnan Aliu (Ramadani, 2019, pp. 29–42).



### The Importance of Establishing a Museum

It is important that these instruments be exhibited within or near a cultural institution, such as a museum. Additionally, preparing catalogs containing photographs and descriptions of each instrument would be particularly valuable.

### The Importance of Field Research and Cultural Collaboration

To fully understand musical instrument craftsmanship, it is essential to conduct field research and establish close collaboration between masters and local communities. This enables a deeper understanding of traditional practices and their influence on local culture and identity.

The results of this study present a clear and detailed summary of the main findings and conclusions, making a significant contribution to the field of ethnomusicology and cultural studies.

### Biodata of Author



Dr. **Bekim Ramadani** was born in 1970 in the village of Orashje, near Tetova. He completed his primary and secondary education in his hometown. In 2001, he graduated from the Faculty of Music at Tetova State University. He completed his master's degree in Musicology in Tirana in 2006 and earned his PhD in Ethnomusicology in Skopje in 2018. He is currently a faculty member at the Faculty of Music, University of Tetova, where he teaches courses related to folk music and music cognition.

For over twenty years, he also worked as a music teacher at the "Kiril Pejčinović" High School in Tetova and successfully directed the school choir. As an active member and artistic director of the "Xheladin Zeqiri" folk dance ensemble in Tetova and as a co-founder of the group "Margaritarët," he has contributed to the promotion and preservation of Albanian folk music both locally and internationally. His research focuses on the documentation, transcription, and analysis of Albanian traditional music, as well as the cultural role of music in contemporary society. He has presented at numerous academic conferences and published articles in scientific and cultural journals. As the author, co-author, or translator of more than 20 books in the fields of ethnomusicology, traditional music, and music education, he has made significant contributions to the preservation and transmission of Albanian musical folklore. **Email:** b\_ramadani@yahoo.com **ORCID:** 0009-0007-6108-1851 **Institution:** Faculty of Music, University of Tetova, Tetova, North Macedonia

### Selected Publications:

- *Dasma shqiptare në nota – 100 këngë të dashurisë dhe të përjetësisë* (*The Albanian Wedding in Notes – 100 Songs of Love and Eternity*), Tetova: BIR, 2024.
- *Ajri Ismani dhe dëshmia e jetës së tij në krijimtarinë folklorike* (*Ajri Ismani and the Testimony of His Life in Folkloric Creativity*) (co-author), monograph, Tetova: BIR, 2024.
- *Hanife Sejfulla – Reçani dhe Shabindere Bërlajolli – Stafai: Dy zërat e paharrueshëm të këngës shqipe* (*Hanife Sejfulla – Reçani and Shabindere Bërlajolli – Stafai: The Two Unforgettable Voices of Albanian Song*), monograph, Tetova: BIR, 2023.
- *Медитација за мојата уметност* (*Meditation on My Art*), Tetova: BIR, 2021.
- *ShKASh "Xheladin Zeqiri" – Tetovë (1949–2019): Aurora dritëplotë* (*"Xheladin Zeqiri" Folklore Ensemble – Tetova (1949–2019): A Radiant Dawn*), monograph, Tetova: BIR, 2021.
- *Tradita e muzikës popullore shqiptare në Tetovë dhe rrethinat e saj* (*The Tradition of Albanian Folk Music in Tetova and Its Surroundings*), Tetova: BIR, 2020.
- *Традиционалната музичка култура на Албанците од Долни Полог* (*The Traditional Musical Culture of Albanians in Lower Polog*), Tetova: BIR, 2019.
- Translator: *Etnomuzikologjia – Fritz Bose* (*Ethnomusicology – Fritz Bose*), Tetova: BIR, 2019.
- *Meditim për artin tim* (*Reflections on My Art*), Tetova: BIR, 2016.
- *Fjalë pa këngë* (*Words Without Songs*), Tetova: USHT – Faculty of Music, 2014.
- Translator: *Metodika e mësimet të muzikës – Pavel Rojko* (*Methodology of Teaching Music – Pavel Rojko*), Tetova: USHT – Faculty of Music, 2014.

- Translator: *Për të bukurën muzikore – Eduard Hanslick (On the Beautiful in Music – Eduard Hanslick)*, Tetova: UShT – Faculty of Music, 2014.

## References

- Alb Sound Production. (2020, April 26). *Sallah Shabani & Rizvan Sallahi - Mihane* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnXBgaFJSeE>
- Alb Sound Production. (2020, April 27). *Sallah Shabani & Rizvan Sallahi - Moj Kala* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROz-LzgorAI>
- Ankica Vitanova, & Ramadani, B. (2014). *Arti muzikor për vitin I të arsimit gjimnazial - Dispensë (Musical Art for the First Year of Gymnasium Education - Coursebook)*. Tetovë: BIR.
- Bauron, P. (1888). *Les Rives Illyriennes (The Illyrian Shores)*. Paris.
- Ramadani, B., & Iseini, F. (2016). *Punim diplome - Për veglat muzikore me frymë të punëtorisë së mjeshtrit gostivaras Sallah Shabani (Diploma Thesis - On the Wind Instruments from the Workshop of the Gostivar Master Sallah Shabani)*. Tetovë: Fakulteti i muzikës - UShT.
- BeniProduction. (2013, February 9). *Rizvan Sinani dhe Sallah Shabani me Vëllezërit Dervishi - Melodi me kavaj 2* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1WxRPCog4k>
- BeniProduction. (2013, February 19). *Rizvan Sinani, Sallah Shabani - Vëllezërit Dervishi - Melodi me kavaj - 2004* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb01-EwyaCs>
- BeniProduction. (2013, December 12). *Vëllezërit Dervishi - Shkurte Vogel (Oda Kërçovare, TV Gurra) | Këngë Kërçovare (Kërçovare Song)* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ\\_bCWBRGlg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ_bCWBRGlg)
- BeniProduction. (2017, March 20). *Vëllezërit Dervishi - Bini Djemt e Shales (7 Shalat), (Festival: Les Orientales) France* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fv1xa-0epAQ>
- Bose, F. (2019). *Etnomuzikologjia (Ethnomusicology)*. Tetovë: Bekim Ramadani.
- Fejzullai, G. (2001). *Monografia e ShKA "Besa" 1971-2001 (Monograph of SHKA "Besa" 1971-2001)*. Gostivar: Niko Kompany - Shkup.
- Flaka. (2017, November 6). *Video Reportazh | Salla Shabani, mjeshtër i instrumenteve muzikore (Video Report | Salla Shabani, Master of Musical Instruments)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6vfurY5WU>
- Gazeta Metro. (2016, November 22). *Rapsodët tubohen në Lezhë (The Rhapsodists Gather in Lezhë)*. <https://gazetametro.net/rapsodet-tubohen-ne-lezhe/>
- Gazeta Shqip. (2015, May 18). *Argjiro Fest-On, dëshmi e një realiteti të ri folklorik (Argjiro Fest-On, Evidence of a New Folkloric Reality)*. <https://gazeta-shqip.com/2015/05/18/argjiro-fest-on-deshmi-e-nje-realiteti-te-ri-folklorik/>
- Gazeta Telegraf. (2021, March 17). *Flet këngëtari Artan Kola: Ja pse një vajzë kineze më kërkoi kasetën me këngët "Dasma e malësorit" (Singer Artan Kola Speaks: Why a Chinese Girl Asked Me for the Cassette with "The Highlander's Wedding" Songs)*. <https://telegraf.al/speciale/flet-kengetari-artan-kola-ja-pse-nje-vajze-kineze-me-kerkoi-kaseten-me-kenget-dasma-e-malesorit/>
- Hanife Sejfullai - Reçani R.I.P. (2014, November 28). *Hanife Sejfullai - Reçani: "Kënga e Hasimes" ("The Song of Hasime")* [Video]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=600814733356157>
- Iso iso. (2021, May 15). *Rreth Oxbakut - Interpretime me Kavalle nga Sallah Shabani dhe Adnan Aliu (Around the Hearth - Performances with Kavall by Sallah Shabani and Adnan Aliu)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tW3d-2fg-vc>
- Kraja, M. (2018). *Fjalori Enciklopedik i Kosovës Vëll. 2 (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Kosovo Vol. 2)*. Prishtinë: Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës.
- Media, R. (2012, May 4). *Melodi me Gajde - Salla Shabani (Melody with Bagpipe - Salla Shabani)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIXTNDknMgI>
- Media, R. (2012, May 4). *Salla Shabani - Melodi me kavall (Salla Shabani - Melody with Kavall)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4WMqu8q5eo>
- Mema, M. (2018, December 22). *Gjurmë Shqiptare - Kush po e fal Eposin dhe Labutën? (Albanian Traces - Who Is Giving Away the Epic and the Labuta?)* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIEcUF\\_Kt\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIEcUF_Kt_A)
- MUZIKE & FILM SHQIP. (2017, May 4). *Rizvan Sinani, Salla Shabani & Adnan Aliu - Prej ne Diber ne Tirane (From Dibër to Tirana)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzQ0FsMJsKM>

- MUZIKE & FILM SHQIP. (2017, March 23). *Vëllezërit Dervishi, Sallah Shabani & Adnan Aliu - 30 Couca* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW\\_hm51nplA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW_hm51nplA)
- MUZIKE & FILM SHQIP. (2021, May 16). *Musa Izeri, Dervish Dervishi, Sallah Shabani, Adnan Aliu, Dilaver Rexhepi - Improvizim Instrumental (Instrumental Improvisation)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMvGRyoXaO0>
- MUZIKE & FILM SHQIP. (2022, February 18). *Sallah Shabani & Emin Xhaferi - Melodi me Gajde (Melody with Bagpipe)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Go9813CgAz4>
- MUZIKE & FILM SHQIP. (2022, February 3). *Sallah Shabani & Emin Xhaferi - Udbes se Shullonit (melodi me kavalla) [On the Shulloni Road (Melody with Kavall)]* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRbqup1zIQs>
- Sokoli, R., & Miso, P. (1991). *Veglat muzikore të popullit shqiptar (The Musical Instruments of the Albanian People)*. Tiranë: ASHRPSSH.
- Ramadani, B. (2019). *Adnan Aliu, prodhues dhe interpretues i shquar i veglave muzikore popullore aerofone (Adnan Aliu, Distinguished Producer and Performer of Aerophone Folk Musical Instruments)*. Etnoalb, 3.
- Ramadani, B. (2023). *Hanife Sejfulla Reçani dhe Shabindere Bërlajolli Stafai, dy zërat e paharrueshëm të këngës shqipe (Hanife Sejfulla Reçani and Shabindere Bërlajolli Stafai, the Two Unforgettable Voices of Albanian Song)*. Tetovë: BIR.
- Thalloczy, L. v. (1916). *Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen I (Illyrian-Albanian Research I)*. München und Leipzig.
- TOPESTRADA TV Tetovë. (2017, February 20). *Emisioni nga Tradita - Rizvan Sinani & Salla Shabani dhe Rovenë Hoti (Program from Tradition - Rizvan Sinani & Salla Shabani and Rovenë Hoti)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJZOrpAwDuk>
- TOPESTRADA TV Tetovë. (2020, December 5). *Salla Shabani & Shefket Ismani - Melodi me kavaj (Melody with Kavall)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqR4FXy05Ss>

