



Book Review

A review of the book: *Gjurmë të Qamilit të Vogël në muzikë* ('Traces of Little Kamil')

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Abstract

The city of Gjakova, beyond its historical, social, and economic significance, is renowned for a range of cultural characteristics recognized both nationally and internationally. Among these, the Gjakovar aheng—a musical tradition deeply rooted in the city's cultural memory—occupies a prominent place. Originating in ancient times, this tradition symbolizes the sanctification of life and reflects the citizens' devotion to preserving their cultural heritage across generations. The aheng tradition embodies a synthesis of various artistic expressions, combining folk singing with instrumental music, dance, popular games, blessings, rituals, and ceremonies. It may be understood as a form of folkloric theater, wherein these elements interact to generate a symbolic code shared and interpreted collectively by participants and performers. This monographic study aims to analyze and bring to light specific characteristics of one of the most iconic figures of Gjakova's musical heritage: Qamili i Vogël (Little Qamil), whose contributions remain integral to the identity and continuity of this cultural tradition.

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Book Title: Traces of Qamili i Vogël in Music

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This monographic study focuses on a prominent figure in Albanian musical heritage, exploring multiple dimensions of his contributions:

- as a composer,
- as a performer,
- as a collector and preserver of Albanian musical traditions, and
- as a mentor and supporter of the younger generation.

The selected topic is considered both important and timely, as it addresses an area that has not been sufficiently covered in a comprehensive academic format, despite existing contributions from various authors. The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in a broad range of literature selected from the fields of Albanian urban music, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies. In addition to published and unpublished sources that have informed specific

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sections of this monograph, extensive fieldwork and empirical research were also conducted. This study would be incomplete and less credible without the direct contact and conversations held with numerous individuals who continue to contribute to the preservation, enrichment, and cultivation of authentic Albanian musical traditions.

The choice of research methodology is crucial to the success of any academic investigation, especially when addressing a complex topic such as this. Given the ethnomusicological nature of the research, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate. Ethnomusicological studies are inherently qualitative due to their methodological tools, such as observation, data collection through interviews (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), and the use of photos, audio, and video recordings that are later analyzed in detail.

Fieldwork was conducted to collect relevant materials using several methods:

- interviews and conversations with selected participants,
- the use of questionnaires (developed in collaboration with the co-author),
- direct observation, including active engagement and follow-up questions with the interviewees.

Participants were selected according to criteria widely recognized in folkloristic studies, and particular care was taken in applying appropriate techniques and methods during fieldwork. Musical materials of interest were recorded using both audio recorders and video cameras, and notes were taken where possible. Questionnaires were also used to collect additional data based on the researcher's areas of inquiry.

This monographic study is organized into four main chapters, excluding the introduction, bibliography, and name index. Each chapter functions as a standalone unit, examining specific themes and issues, while collectively contributing to the overall structure and content of the research.

Chapter 1

The first chapter provides the historical background within which the aheng (traditional music gathering) of the city of Gjakova developed over the years. It highlights the role of the local nobility in establishing musical societies and introduces the earliest representatives of Gjakova's aheng. It also discusses the first musical instruments introduced into this tradition, the emotional and ideological content of the musical materials, notable composers, and the influence of musical traditions from other Albanian cities such as Berat, Elbasan, and Shkodër on the development of aheng in Gjakova.

Chapter 2

The second chapter focuses on the life and contributions of Qamil Muhaxhiri, presenting him as a composer, performer, collector, and promoter of new talents. This chapter is structured around four main areas:

- an overview of his original compositions,
- an analysis of the songs he performed,
- a review of 11 pieces of musical documentation written and compiled by him,
- an exploration of his role as a discoverer and supporter of emerging performers.

Chapter 3

In the third chapter, ten prominent national and international figures are selected to share their perspectives on Qamili i Vogël and his contributions to the preservation, enrichment, and cultivation of Albanian musical traditions across all Albanian-speaking regions.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter presents the most significant events organized in memory and honor of the multifaceted figure of Qamili i Vogël, as well as a selection of songs performed by various artists as tributes to him.

Conclusion

This monographic study offers a significant contribution to the documentation and interpretation of Albanian urban musical heritage through the lens of Qamili i Vogël's multifaceted legacy. By analyzing historical developments, musical practices, and ethnomusicological data, the work not only sheds light on the evolution of aheng in Gjakova but also

preserves the memory of one of its most iconic figures. The methodological approach, combining fieldwork, interviews, and archival materials, adds depth and credibility to the study. Furthermore, the emphasis on Qamil Muhaxhiri's roles—as composer, performer, cultural transmitter, and mentor—reveals the broader cultural impact of his life and work. This study will be valuable to scholars in the fields of ethnomusicology, folklore, and Albanian cultural studies, as well as to music educators and practitioners aiming to understand the roots and relevance of traditional music in contemporary contexts. It is both a tribute and a resource for future research.

Biodata of Author



Dr. **Albin Sadiku** was born on March 10, 1974, in Bujanoc. He completed his primary education in his hometown and pursued his secondary music education in Prizren. He graduated from the Faculty of Music in Prishtina, specializing in General Music Pedagogy. He later earned a second degree in Ethnomusicology from the same faculty. He continued his postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Music in Tirana under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Vasil Tole. In June 2006, he was awarded the title of Master in Musicology. Since 2003, he has been working as a researcher at the Albanological Institute of Prishtina, in the Department of Folklore, Ethnomusicology Section. He has published scholarly articles in various journals across Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, and other countries. On October 23, 2014, he defended his doctoral dissertation at the Center for Albanological Studies in Tirana. In 2017, he published the monographic study "The Art of Children's Singing in Bujanoc and Presheva: Play, Song, Lullaby." In 2020, he released another monograph titled "The Role, Function, and Use of the Šarkija in Kosovo." Most recently, in 2023, he published "Female Singing in Albanian Wedding Traditions in Bujanoc and Presheva."

