

PLUCKING & STRUMMING IN THE BALKANS

By

Gerald Jatzek

The Greek *bouzouki* and the *baglamas* are related to the Turkish *bağlama* family of instruments, which in turn goes back to the Persian *dutar*. The same applies to the Albanian *çifteli*.

The Albanian and Kosovar *sharkia* is a close relative of the *šargija*, which is common in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. These three countries also share the use of the *dangubica*.

The *tambura* of Bulgaria and Macedonia derives from the Greek *bouzouki* and takes its name from the Mesopotamian *tanbur*. It is also related to the Croatian *tamburica* family of string instruments.

The Cretan *laouto*, the Spanish *laúd*, and the medieval European *lute* developed out of the Arabic *oud*. The same holds true for the Romanian *cobza*, called *koboz* in Hungary. This one is not to be confused with the *kobza*, which was developed in Ukraine when Turkic people from Abkhazia settled in the Poltava region.

The Romanian and Moldavian *zongora* is a variation of the guitar, but its name comes from the Hungarian term for piano.

These cultural ties make wars between the Balkan countries highly unlikely (or so the argument goes).

Gerald Jatzek is a poet, musician, and mail artist from Vienna, Austria, who writes in German and English. He has published books for children and adults, short stories, plays for radio, and essays. In 2001 he won the Austrian State Prize for Children's Poetry. His books have been translated into Korean and Turkish; his poems have appeared in anthologies and literature papers in Europe, India, and the USA.