

NATIONAL SONGS, II

Summary

Teodoras Brazys – a priest, an important figure of musical culture who laid the foundations of Lithuanian culture during the National revival. Brazys was active in many fields: he served as an organist, choir conductor, educator, composer, publicist, and musicologist who studied church hymns, folk songs, and published articles on music. Besides original works of sacred music that he composed and folk songs harmonised by him, Brazys left a large number of folk songs collected by himself. In the archives of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore two large manuscript collections, LTR 205 and LTR 443, which include 1358 songs with melodies, are stored. Most of the songs were recorded in Dzūkija – a south-eastern Lithuanian ethnographic region where Brazys resided for five years since 1918.

Brazys' collections occupy an exceptional place in the history of collection and publication of folk songs. Melodies recorded by him exceed other scanty songs with melodies collected at the time by their professionalism. As Brazys accurately documented the notes, he appreciated the value and uniqueness of recorded melodies. As a music theorist he was mainly interested in the melodies of folk songs, yet he accurately documented the texts of songs as well. Through the work of Brazys a lot of most valuable songs from Dzūkija, recorded with melodies, have been preserved, as well as their comparatively complete texts, which was not always achieved in later times.

The first book of *National Songs* (published in 2014) contains songs recorded from informants who resided in the localities of Kietaviškės, Semeliškės and Žiežmariai. Currently these localities are incorporated in the regional municipalities of Elektrėnai and Kaišiadorys.

The current, second book of *National Songs* contains songs sung to Brazys by Ieva Krukoniūtė who lived in the village of Druskininkai, Merkinė parish, Varėna county. She was 50 years old and had a phenomenal memory – she submitted 410 songs, included in this book, and 22 wedding laments (which were incorporated in a scientific publication by Brazys in the journal *Tauta ir žodis* in 1924).

Songs in this book are arranged based on scholarly principles of folklore source compilation. Genre-based and typological structure of the book reveals the value of the variety of Ieva Krukoniūtė's song repertory which is rooted in the everyday life of traditional peasant community as seen in the contexts of various works, rituals, and entertainment. Presented songs objectively reflect the singing tradition of Dzūkija at the end of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century which was dominated by the songs with a classic poetic and melodic composition. Such songs include work songs, the songs of calendar rituals, ballads, as well as wedding, love, and military–historical songs which were best preserved in this region. The repertory of songs presented in this book varies based on genre and stylistics. A separate distinctive layer includes songs distinguished by their tone of humour, irony (songs describing wedding participants, feast, christening, children's, humorous songs, folk couplets) which, fostered by the folk culture of laughter, were performed in various ritual and everyday contexts. A scanty number of songs of a new style and of individual origin was determined by the minor influence of scribal culture in the rural areas of this region. However, several songs on literary, didactic, and social themes reveal that the singer herself and the people of her environment were open to the changes of folklore tradition.

All the songs were liked and performed by Ieva Krukoniūtė, therefore their texts were well preserved in her memory. The singer has improvised and developed her own interpretations of a few texts. A major part of her songs was performed only in south-eastern Lithuania, and some songs or their distinctive versions have been recorded only from this singer.