

NATIONAL SONGS, III

Summary

Teodoras Brazys – a priest, an important figure of musical culture who was laying the foundations of the reviving Lithuanian culture. Brazys was active in many fields: he was 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 that he collected. In the archives of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore two large manuscript collections, LTR 204 and LTR 443, which contain 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 that he recorded are distinguished from contemporaneous scanty recordings of songs with melodies by their professionalism. As Brazys accurately documented the notes, he appreciated the value and uniqueness of recorded melodies. As a composer and 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, including their comparatively complete texts, which was not always achieved in later times.

The first book of *National Songs* contains 412 songs recorded from 37 informants who resided in the localities of Kietaviškės, Semeliškės and Žiezmariai. Currently these localities are incorporated in the district municipalities of Elektrėnai and Kaišiadorys. The second book of *National Songs* contains 410 songs sung to Brazys by Ieva Krukoniūtė who lived in the village of Druskininkai, Merkinė parish, Varėna county.

The last, third, book of the series contains 528 songs. The majority of them – 498 songs – was recorded from thirty informants in various localities of Alytus and Grodno counties (currently they constitute the environs of Alytus and Varėna districts). Along with the songs published

in the first two books, they represent the rich and authentic singing culture 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. Further 30 songs, which were sung to Brazys by seven informants from other ethnographic regions of Lithuania – various localities of Aukštaitija and Žemaitija, most probably, were collected approximately in 1913–1915, i.e., before his five-year residence in Dzūkija.

In the book, songs are arranged based on informants and their place of residence. The repertory of each singer is organised thematically, taking into account the function of songs. Genre-based and typological variety of songs, as well as textual commentaries and the principles of melody editing are presented in the notes at the end of the book.

The introductory article reviews the history and practice of collecting and publishing songs from Dzūkija in the second half of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century, which reveals the historical and sociocultural background of Brazys' efforts in folklore.