

DVE NEVESTI

Quick

(1st pair)

Bulgaria

Ej, dve ne-ve-sri or- o vo-dat doZ

doZ done le done li-be mo- je

(2nd pair)

Ej, dve ne-ve-sti o- ro vo-dat doZ

doZ done le done li-be mo- je

Ej, em.

Rain

BULGARIAN SONG

Bulgarian singing is an ancient tradition that still continues. The music is traditionally sung by women. Vocal sounds that are characteristic of Bulgarian singing are ululations, nasalized tone quality (originally developed so that women could project their voices across fields), and *flips* — rapid ascents and descents from a notated pitch (usually the interval of a minor third). The music is based on the drone principle: singers are divided so that one sings the melody, and two or more sing a second part that functions as a drone.

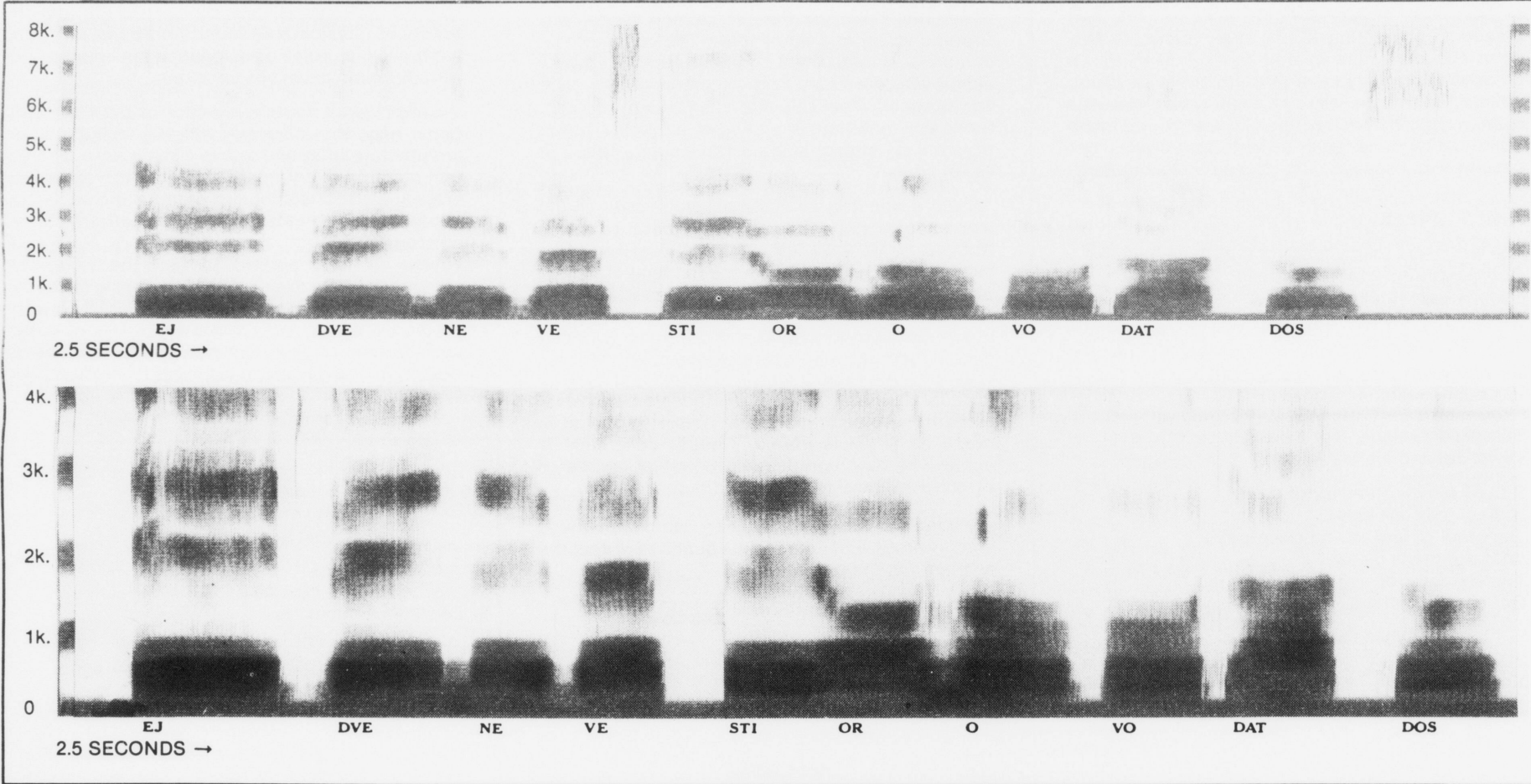
Dve Nevesti is a characteristic example of a Bulgarian song. It is antiphonal (two groups of singers answer one another in alternation) and in a diaphonic (two-voice) mode. Voices are in a close frequency range of each other. A spectrogram of the drone part of the first phrase of the song (second voice) indicates how each phoneme of the text gives the phrase a definitive shape. The noise bands created by [s] can be seen in the high end of the frequency spectrum. The phrase begins in mid-range with the vowel [ei] moving to [i] and down again to [o]. (Fig. 2) In this spectrogram the phonemes are recognizable as sound segments consisting of vowels and consonants. The phoneme boundaries are distinct, and are blurred only in the transition from [sti] to [or], where the high formant area of [i] descends to [o].

STOICHEIA

According to the Ancient Greeks, the origin of grammar was not the *gramma*, or letter, but the *stoicheion*, a vowel sound. Speech and melody both involved the organization of tone; one according to verbal reason and the other according to pitch. The ambiguity of speech and song is characteristic of Greek poetry. The congruence of harmonics, rhythemics, and grammar were thought to be theoretical abstractions from an original verbal/musical unity.

Stoicheia, the ancient Greek word for vowels, is the title of my piece for five female voices, three saxophones, cello, bass, and two percussionists. It is based on a progression of vowels, beginning with [u] in a low register, and progressing to [o], [a], [ei], and finally to [i]. The acoustic properties of vowels are a form-determining parameter. The instruments and voices combine in the first section to reinforce an unbroken stream of vowels with a continuously expanding registral field. This movement of vowels has determined the spectral form of the piece. (Fig. 3) Timbral transformations of vowels are created with the additions of nasalization and consonants, creating phonemes from Bulgarian singing. Consonants are also used to create distinct phoneme boundaries, and to accentuate rhythm. Ululations function to create transitions to percussive sections with a narrow spectral field. The final section is a dense textural accumulation of vowels [u], [a], and [i] in all five voices. The piece ends with a gradual filtering down of the spectral field, until the voices dissolve into a single spectral strand with the closed consonant [m].

Fig. 2 DVE NEVESTI, first phrase (Drone part).



STOICHEIA

Voices should use very little vibrato.

- u o a — nasalized vowels.
- harmonic singing: fundamental (lowest note) is produced with upper harmonics simultaneously through relaxation of vocal cords, tongue, jaw, and lips.
- ? — ululations: partial constriction of larynx created by a combination of 'creaky voice' and 'glottal stop', resulting in repeated, percussive articulations.
- wi-i-fi — jaw trill: jaw should be relaxed, resulting in a wide vibrato.

Harmonics sound as written.

- HH — circular bowing near the bridge of the bass; sound should be unbroken, with continuous changes in harmonics on all strings.
- c.l.b. — percussive effect with bouncing wood of bow on open strings near the bridge.
- harmonics glissando on indicated open string.
- if preceded by a single note, that note is held for the duration of the line. If preceded by a note group, the note group is repeated at the indicated speed for the duration of the line.

pp

mf

f

ff

pp

mf

f

ff

H. 1.

F. 2.

L. 3.

L. 4.

T. 5.

fuaia i

uaia i

uaia i

uaia i

uaia i

STOICHEIA: textural accumulation of vowels in fine voices.