

THE LANGUAGE OF COSTUME (At the exhibit entitled *The Language of Slovene Peasant Costume in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana**)

In a pleasant atmosphere the third exhibit dedicated to the costume of Slovene peasants opened in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum on February 6. It has been the third in the last fifteen years because the knowledge about this subject grew so extensive — because of many years of research done by dr. Marija Makarovič and other Slovene ethnologists — that a new presentation became possible, possible in the sense of the ethnological as well as museological interpretation of the collected material.

The ethnological interpretation deals with an explanation which is a result of two factors; first, of the communicativeness of different material which can not be treated apart from the context of life-style, and second, of the contemporary research of culture as a functional communication system in which every cultural phenomenon or element has a special sign (signal), the emphasis of which is on its informative value. This informative value goes beyond the primary meaning of function (i. e. the protective function of costume) of a certain phenomenon. It acquires different informative values in everyday life, in the surroundings where it begins to have its own special life. This life is closely connected to people, to their activities and their values.

These ideas are not new; they emerged during the time of the so-called Prague structuralism when semiology — or rather semiotics — originated. Through the ethnological research of Peter Bogatyrev about the functions of costume in Moravia the philological knowledge started to pass on to a wider area of culture.

The dynamical scheme of polyfunction of costume — or better clothing culture — has been confirmed. In our country it is possible to follow this theoretical point of view from the 19th century on because there are enough material, pictorial and written resources then (this is much harder to do for earlier periods of time which makes the results less systematical and incomplete). Thus it is possible to recognize the Slovene peasant costume through its informative values: clothing reveals social relations among people (sexual or professional relations, age relations, economically and socially distinctive function of costume) and their appartenance to a certain place, country, nation or religion, its practical value (the protective and occasional function) and also the aesthetical value which the carriers have or cultivate (taste). This latter is a special value and to a certain group it often becomes a guideline for a certain type of behaviour which is manifested in a specific common feature (also certain regulations, different kinds of fashion) and is always a sign of integrity of man's material, social and spiritual existence.

The survey of Slovene peasant clothing culture from about the middle of the 19th century on also reveals its temporal or developmental dimension which indicates the variability of economical as well as social conditions.

The exhibit consistently follows the ethnological concept and with the help of the setting of dolls, rich pictorial material and commentary restores to life the loquacious message of the exhibited costumes which can really be termed Slovene because of their provincial, social, occasional and common features which condition the formal and functional diversity. And when we think of the phenomenon which is termed "the Slovene peasant costume", this exhibit greatly contributes to the deeper consideration of exploitation of certain phenomena of our cultural heritage in the present time which — however unintentionally — distort and impoverish its real image.

Beside being optically charming and lucid, the exhibit is communicative, instructive and precious for every visitor, but above all it corrects the myth about the antiqueness, uniqueness and misunderstanding of folklore which often happens at an exhibit where aesthetical criteria prevail. This exhibit avoided this by exhibiting different costumes as well as different pictorial material and texts. We should also mention the attractive and informative catalogue** which contains all the necessary information.

The concept of the exhibit corrects the already obsolete and professionally untenable place of costume within the province of material culture in the classical ethnological system. It introduces the costume as a phenomenon which acquires its real informative value dealing with the connection of man with various objects around him only through intermixing of other phenomena which define a certain life-style and can be interpreted only through a complete survey of ethnological field of research.

* Exhibit: *The Language of Slovene Peasant Costume* (from February 6 to May 31, 1981)

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Restoration and dressing of dolls: Ana Perko

Design: Marjan Loboda

Technical realization: Albin Romih, Janez Černe

Photographs: Archives of the Slovene Ethnographical Museum, made by Foto Nučič

** Catalogue: *The Language of Slovene Peasant Costume*

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SLOVENE FOLK MUSIC

THE RESIA VALLEY (Folk Group 'Val Resia')

A short time ago two records came out (independantly from the Original Slovene Folk Music series) which represent Slovene folk music in the Resia valley, Italy.

Resia (Valle di Resia in Italian) is a valley in Friuli-Venezia Giulia along the Resia brook which is a tributary of the Bela river. There are the Muzei mountains (1860 meters) to the south and the Kanin highlands (Kanin 2585 meters) to the North. Cattle breeding is the most important part of economy here, but immigration is strong since the Resian economy is rather passive. In this valley one of the most archaic Slovene dialects is spoken, a dialect which has even developed some original features. The center of Resia is the town of Ravenca (Prato di Resia in Italian). A few years ago this country was struck by a heavy earthquake which made the life of the Slovene minority here even harder.

High mountain ranges in the West and an enclosed valley have protected and preserved the Resian folk culture up to this day. The Resian folk tradition, which originated many centuries ago, has preserved archaisms rarely found elsewhere in Europe. The folk-tales, which the Resian free imagination continuously adapts to the present day circumstances, are rooted in the oldest European myths.

In the Resian music — in songs and dances — the old not-tempered scale is preserved. They sing and play only a single melody accompanied by a medieval bourdon. The violin is still the central instrument here; elsewhere it has been discarded in favour of more modern instruments. With it the Resians imitate the sound of bagpipes which means that two or three hundred years ago the bagpipes were used here. To achieve a bagpipe — like sound the violin has been tuned to a higher pitch through lowering of its bridge. The sound is thus sharper and more easily heard by the dancers outside in the square. Violin is called the *cýtira* and the violinist *cýtiraš* or