

## OBSERVATIONS FROM THE NATIONWIDE ALBANIAN FOLK FESTIVAL

*Rapsha 2017, Tuz, Montenegro (18-20 August)*

On August 18-20, 2017, the Albanian Folk Festival was held in Rapsha of Tuzi. The author was invited to the post of a jury member.

The festival was attended by **22 Albanian folk groups, associations or troops** representing seven countries: **Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Italy, Serbia and the USA**. According to the Festival Director, each troop had to perform for *15 minutes live* rather than by play-back (CD playing). The program had to be as sourceful, echoing mainly local authenticity. Even the *folk costumes* were the most original. This Festival marked its **5th edition**.

As by the program, the seven participating troops performing the first evening gathered in Tuz for the *Troops Kick-off Parade*.

In the first evening (August 18, 2017), the competing performers were **SHKA "Rapsha", Drume-Hot and the "Shota" National Ensemble, Prishtina - Kosovo**. The following troops followed suit: **"Krahu i Shqiponjës Taip Medani", Vlora -Albania; SHKA "Sali Mani" Malësia e Madhe, Albania; "Burimet e Sharrit", Tetovo - Macedonia; SHKA "Maja e karafilit", Plavë-Guci, Montenegro; SHKA "Gryka e Kaçanikut", Kaçanik - Kosovo**.

In the second evening, the competing troops were **SHKA "Dedë Gjon Luli", Traboin - Hot, Montenegro; "Shkëmbi" dhe "Shkëndija" from the Arbëresh provinces of Akuaformoza and San Benedeto Ullanova, Italy; the polyphonic troop "Lunxhëria", Lunxhëri -Albania; the ethnocultural ensemble "Katerina Josipi", Zym - Prizren, Kosovo; the cultural association "Skampa", Elbasan -Albania; "Gurra e Kurbinit", Laç - Albania; SHKA "Zëri i Luginës", Bujanoc, Lugina e Preshevës - Serbia**.

In the second evening, the competing troops were: SHKA "Besa", Triesh, Malësi e Madhe - Montenegro; "Gjergj Kastrioti - Skënderbeu", Detroit - Michigan, USA; folk troop "Mati", Mat - Albania; SHKA "Malëtori", Gjonaj - Prizren, Kosovo; the polyphonic troop "Bilbilat e Kolonjës", Gjirokastra - Albania; SHKA "Jahi Hasani", Çegran - Gostivar, Macedonia; the native troop "Rugova", Rugovë - Peja, Kosovo; the folk troop "Bashkimi kombëtar", New York- USA.

In conclusion, the jury awarded the prizes to the three best troops. The author defined this event as a **nationwide festival with a huge backgrounds**. Based on its organization, this festival can be considered an international one similar to the ones I have attended for decades, in: Germany, Turkey, Italy, Romania, Hungary, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, France, Spain and recently in Slovenia.