

Ethnic Dance Music in Northern Indiana

Orchestra Balkan

IH208 Gary - March 1, 1987. Macedonian dance music.

Nick Georgifski (accordion), Steve Lozoski (accordion- vocals), Steve Poposki (electric guitar-vocals), Perry Sperich (electric bass-vocals) & Steve Serekus (drums)

Dance for 6th anniversary of SS. Peter & Paul Macedonian Orthodox Church Youth Organization; recorded by Paul L. Tyler

The Macedonian Youth Organization is for young people in the church up to the age of about thirty. They view the organization as preparing them for the leadership roles in the church that they will fill in the near future. The organization supports several athletic teams and a folk dance group. The dance group regularly attends dance competitions involving groups from other churches in their diocese. There will be a large affair with dance performances and social dancing over Labor Day when the Gary organization hosts a diocesan or national conference of the Macedonian Orthodox Church Youth Organization. The local organization also sponsors picnics in the summer, and performances by touring professional and amateur folklore ensembles from Yugoslavia and other Macedonian communities in North America.

The dance was held in the Macedonian Hall at St.St. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church at 51st and Virginian in Gary. Approximately two hundred people were in attendance representing all age groups. Tables and chairs were set up along the north and east walls of the hall, leaving a dance floor of about forty feet by fifty feet. The band, "Orchestra Balkan" was set up on a stage at the south end of the hall. Members of the Youth Organization sold food and drinks at tables along the west wall. And also on the west side of the hall, adult women sold food from the kitchen, while men served drinks from the bar. Most men in attendance crowded into the barroom. Women who weren't dancing or working in the kitchen sat at the tables and talked in groups of women or of couples. Children played around the edges of the floor.

The dance started at 7:30, and for the first two or three hours, around forty people, mostly women, danced in a single line. A core group of about a dozen young women, were on the floor for almost the whole time. They stood around between dances, waiting for the next one to start. Older women got up from their seats, came out on the floor to dance, and then returned to their tables when the music stopped. One or two men, including one elderly man in particular, joined some of the dances. The men who danced always waited until the dance was well underway before they joined the line. Many dances were performed only by women.

By 10:00 or 10:30, only twenty or so young people had stayed around to dance. Now a few men danced regularly. Two slow horos were led by a small groups of young men. I was told that normally the men only started dancing at the end of the evening, after they had gotten loosened up at the bar, and then the dance could last well past midnight. But this evening, only about eight to ten young women were still dancing at 11:00. At 11:30 the band quit. As they were packing up, some of the hangers on shouted out requests. As I was leaving, the band got their instruments out and started to play again.