

ENJOY DANCING TO BULGARIAN MUSIC? THINK YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN MORE?

If Bulgarian Folk Dance classes had a recommended reading list, right at the top you'd likely find two books by Timothy Rice: **MAY IT FILL YOUR SOUL—EXPERIENCING BULGARIAN MUSIC** (1994) and **MUSIC IN BULGARIA—EXPERIENCING MUSIC, EXPRESSING CULTURE** (2004). Both come with a CD inside the back cover, each bearing dozens of song and music examples, including several we move to at almost every Balkan folk dance.

Timothy Rice is a professor of Musicology at UCLA. He grew up loving folk dance so much that he moved to Bulgaria for the better part of three years, to discover how it all came to be.

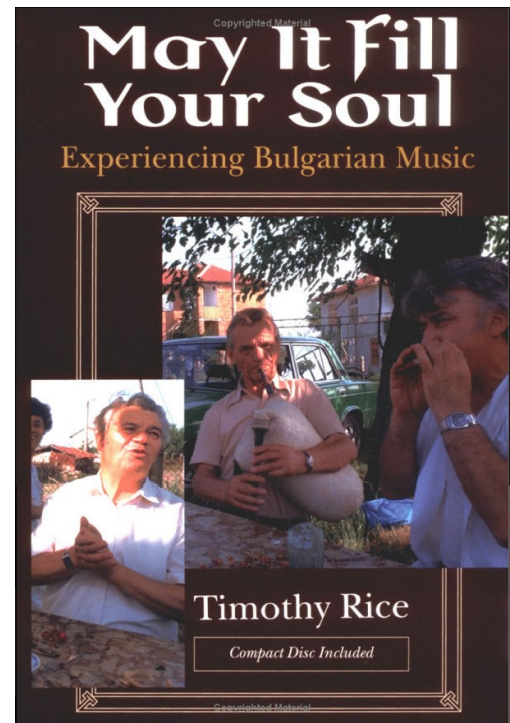
Rice had the incredible good fortune to find mentors in the welcoming Varimezov family—Kostadin, a self-taught gaida player who helped him learn to play the bagpipe, and Kostadin's wife Todorina—an encyclopedia of experience in traditional song and dance. Through the Varimezovs, Timothy became familiar with Bulgarian culture, where the main function of instrumental music was to accompany the Sunday or holiday dances—where song was largely a woman's domain, while the musicians were almost entirely men.

Following World War II, under a new socialist government most towns and villages based on small, self-supporting family farms largely disappeared—and with them went the familiar seasonal, agricultural-associated festivals. Only weddings remained as an occasion when families gathered to celebrate in ritual song and dance as they had for countless generations.

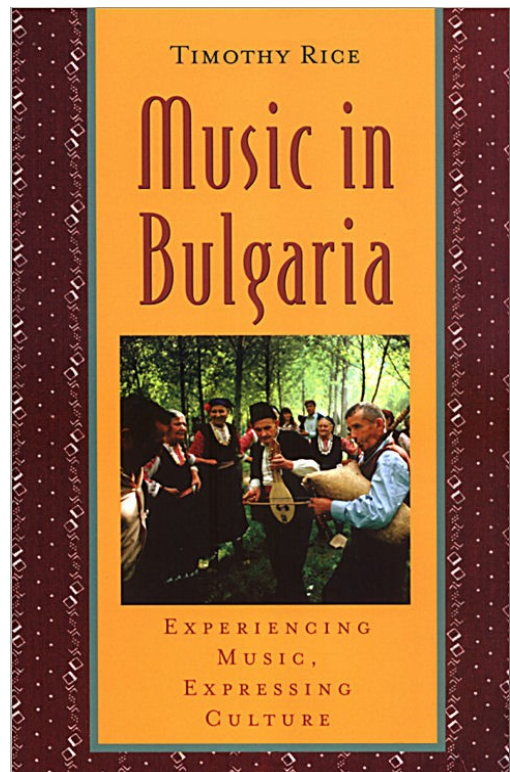
Farming became concentrated in large, more productive communes, and government-supported education placed a high emphasis on nationalism and culture. Bulgarian song, dance and music had an important place in every elementary and high school curriculum, and for the first time, musicians could earn a living playing their music. Without this development, it may be that traditional Bulgarian (and Balkan) music and dance could not have survived.

Timothy Rice explains how Kostadin and Todorina Varimezov played important roles in the new system—both as sources of information and as teachers. The Bulgarian dance teachers who put on our workshops today were trained through these programs. And we ourselves are students in this process, when we study Bulgarian folk dance, or dance to our Balkan tunes.

Timothy Rice's 1994 book traces the role of music and dance in the Bulgarian farming-based culture, and how it changed after World War II through the state-supported cultural programs into the form recognized by folk dancers today. His 2004 book reviews these changes, and explores how the demise of socialism and its cultural supports opened new avenues for today's Bulgarian folk musicians.



May It Fill Your Soul – Experiencing Bulgarian Music. by Timothy Rice. University of Chicago Press, 1994. 396 pages + CD.



Music in Bulgaria – Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture. by Timothy Rice. Oxford University Press, 2004. 119 pages + CD.