A RETURN TO BROTHERHOOD: NATIONALISM, GLOBALIZATION AND THE NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITY IN ROMANI BRASS BAND MUSIC IN SERBIA

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis tells a story, or more accurately, many stories: The story of the Romani people who have been famed for their musicianship for centuries, but have also been despised and persecuted for their differences and lack of a singular homeland. It tells the story of Serbia; its trials and tribulations; a country keen to be known for its hospitality rather than its wars. There is also my story, and my family's story, the friendships that we made along the way, and how our lives were touched by the Serbian people. There is also the deeper story of human experience through music. One only has to watch the news to feel cynical about the merits of human nature, but this thesis tells the story of a people who were not so long ago torn apart with war, xenophobia, and genocide, now welcoming outsiders and celebrating styles of music that they once sought to eliminate. This thesis will show how Romani brass bands bridged the divide between East and West, local and global, urban and rural, pure and ethnic, and how the Roma, a marginalized race of people, helped rebrand the Serbian identity.

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Alyn.
Thank you for all your support and inspiration.

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Introduction

27 July 2015 – Vranje, Serbia

It was a bright sunny morning in Vranje, a town in the south of Serbia close to the borders of neighboring Kosovo, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania, and home to the largest Roma community in Serbia. I took my customary walk to the local bakery to buy burek, a cheese pastry, for my family's breakfast. On the way back a man standing in his backyard greeted me. He asked who I was and introduced himself as Ivica. Ivica told me he was a policeman and was a translator for people crossing the border. He was excited to meet someone who was English and asked what I was doing in Vranje. I explained how I had arranged to meet a Romani trumpet player in Vranje through Facebook and take lessons from him. Ivica asked if he could help and I asked if he could call the trumpet player for me and arrange a meeting with him, as my Serbian was limited. He called the trumpet player and there was no answer. "Tonight," he said, "I will take you to the Gypsy village."[1]

That evening, my wife, Alyn, our four children, and I squeezed into Ivica's old Mercedes and sped off listening to "Vrtlog", a huge hit by Dejan Petrović, a non-Romani trumpet player from western Serbia. As we fumbled with the seatbelts, Ivica waved at us to not worry about the seatbelts; "I am the police". We went through the bustling downtown, which was already alive with people drinking and eating in cafes, and headed up the hill past the police station and hamam (Turkish bath) to Gornja Čačija, the Romani neighborhood. There were many people in the streets, and the houses were in considerably poorer condition. In the square, there was a

[1] The word "Gypsy" is a term frequently used to describe Romani people. The term is used in a variety of contexts, sometimes pejoratively by non-Roma, sometimes by the Roma to describe themselves or in describing how they are perceived by others, and sometimes as a marketing initiative drawing on the exoticism or associated musical reputation with Gypsies. I will normally use the term Roma or Romani unless the context warrants the use of the word, "Gypsy".

statue of a trumpet player. Ivica telephoned the trumpet player again. No answer. Ivica even left a message in Serbian on the trumpet player's voicemail for me.

Ivica drove down a small alley and there was a small tractor in the way. In one of the yards was an older man, probably in his early sixties. Ivica summoned him over and told me, "It's alright. I know him [the older man]. He played at my wedding." He asked if he knew where the trumpet player lives. "Ne," said the older man. Ivica explained that I was English, and a trumpet player and teacher. Another man, in his forties, arrived to investigate. I told Ivica that I wanted to meet other trumpet players, not just the one I had made arrangements with. One man asked me in Serbian if I played trumpet making a trumpet playing gesture. "Da!" I replied. He motioned for me to go with them. I helped my family out of the car and followed the men.

The younger man put a bench out for my family and invited me to come inside the house to play. The house was clean with tiled floors and simple decorations. On top of a dresser were three trumpets: one B-flat trumpet and two trubas, the customary rotary flügelhorn that most Serbian trumpet players use. I picked up the B-flat trumpet but the valves were stuck and would not move easily. "Nema problema," I said and picked up the truba and played something that I hoped sounded Romani. I doubt it sounded good to their ears so I then decided to stick with something that I knew. I played "How Great Thou Art", as it was the first thing that came to my mind, but I knew from previous readings that sound and soul can be as important as virtuosity. The man's son, Stefan, had also come out to listen. Stefan then picked up a truba and played something technical that I could not play although I tried my best to follow along. He then broke into "O When The Saints" and I managed to jam along with him. At the end of our little jam session the man told me that I played well. He led me into his room and showed me all of his trophies and pictures. He told me that he had won Guča, the most important trumpet competition

in the Balkans, many times. In his cabinet, there were the two gold trophies of men playing trumpets that were awarded to those who won Guča.

This man is Nenad Mladenović and he is the only person to have two of those golden trophies. I learned later that Nenad is a descendent of Bakija Bakić. I had heard of the legendary trumpet player, Bakija Bakić, prior to coming to Serbia, and learned later that the bronze statue in the square of Gornja Čačija is of Bakija Bakić. According to the mayor whom I met, it is the first statue of a Rom in the world. I asked Nenad if he could play for me, so he got his trumpet and played right in my face: “O Sole Mio", “Granada”, “O When the Saints”, and some folk tunes. His sound was rich, a little airy at first, with a wide vibrato. His playing was expressive and soulful, not too technical, as he held the trumpet high with pride, and he would bend the notes to alter the tuning. He kept playing and after some time I started to wonder how my family was fairing since no one spoke the same language. I asked if we could go outside because my children loved to hear the trumpet.

We went outside and Nenad continued to play. By now there were around ten to fifteen people gathered in their yard. Alyn was speaking Spanish with a young lady with a baby who was also fluent in Spanish, and my children were at some of the elderly women’s knees. Nenad played some more and then said he was going to rest for a while. We talked and they gave me Turkish coffee. My children were a little intimidated by all the people who knew no English and insisted on holding them. As I sat there and talked, I felt welcome by the warm reception. I started talking to Nenad’s younger son, Martin who spoke English fairly well and had just returned from living in Germany for a time. He told me that Nenad wanted me to come to Guča with them. This was more than what I had dreamed: to play with a brass band at Guča. Nenad told me that I must come tomorrow night six o’clock for a five-hour training. I would sit and

listen for ten minutes and then join in the rehearsal. I kept checking with the English speakers to make sure I had heard correctly and it was not something that was lost in translation, but yes, it seemed like I was to play with this band at Guča.

Nenad started playing again. Fabijan, Nenad's nephew, accompanied him on the snare drum, while Ivica and one of his friends who had turned up, joined in the fun and started to dance. Some of the others encouraged me to get up to dance and Alyn was prompted to do the same by the growing crowd of friends and neighbors, too. Now all my family was in the middle of a private party, dancing to music as they played.[2]

The older man who came to the car when we first arrived in Gornja Čačija was Nenad's brother, Miša. He told me that Nenad is the best trumpet player. He mentioned the trumpet player that I had arranged to meet, lifted his head up and tutted, "Ne, ne." This created a delicate situation: it would not be appropriate to take lessons from two different trumpet players, as it would almost certainly cause offence. But Nenad was giving me the opportunity to play in his band, an experience that was probably greater than taking lessons.

I did go to Guča, but I did not play with Nenad's band. It turned out that they already had a full band and no room for more players. I think that they were trying to test me to see if I would be faithful to come back to learn from them. My family visited Gornja Čačija almost daily during our two-month stay. I did not hear back from the trumpet player I had previously made arrangements with, therefore I never met him. Antonia, Nenad's daughter, told me that he was in Canada. It did not matter. During my time in Vranje, my family and I spent a lot of time with Nenad's family and we became good friends. Nenad, Stefan, and Miša taught me many tunes; I played with the band at a private function for the mayor at the local music school, and appeared

[2] Matthew Kay, "First night at Nenad's house," July 27, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3yms_HCD_8&feature=youtu.be.

on both local and national television with Nenad and Stefan. I attended a folk music practice where Nenad and Stefan were playing. I was able to interview both of them through an English translator who ran the local language school.

Upon my return to the United States, I used the research I had gathered to write a document on Romani trumpet performance practice and present a lecture-recital on my research findings. This thesis builds on those experiences and interviews in Vranje, research from existing resources that I did prior to my fieldwork and after, and my transcriptions of Romani music. It also draws from fieldwork that I undertook in the United States at the Balkan Music and Dance workshop though the Eastern European Folklore Center, the Eastern European music festival, two visits to *Goldenfest* in Brooklyn, New York, and my own personal experiences of forming a Romani-style band in Lansing, Michigan.

The thesis will be organized into four chapters: Chapter 1 will describe the research methods I used and the challenges and rewards of undertaking this kind of research. It will discuss current literature on existing ethnomusicological research and also research applied to hybridity in music and its respective communities. It seems that in music and in many other social groups, there are different levels of communities' cultural formations, this will also be explored more in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 will discuss the musical language of Romani brass music in Serbia, the importance of the Guča Trumpet Festival, and how the various influences from the immediate locality and also the global influences through media contribute to their musical style. I will also discuss both the cultural significance of their role as professional wedding musicians. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the hybridity of Romani music, its various influences, and its positioning in the Balkans.

Chapter 1. Research and Methodology

31 July 2015, 4 pm - Meeting with Sanya, reporter for Vranjske, the local newspaper in Vranje.

Mirko, the landlord of our apartment asked me if a reporter could come and talk with me. As a former banker in the town, he had a lot of connections. I think he, like a lot of the other Vranje residents, thought it was interesting that I should come and do research in little known town in the south of Serbia. I reluctantly agreed to meet at 4 pm. I was anxious about our meeting. I did not want to be misquoted or misrepresented or have anything printed that may damage my relationship with Nenad and his family.

Sanya, the reporter for Vranjske was a young lady who had grown up in Vranje. We met in Mirko's backyard amid the fruit trees, flowers and bees. Mirko went and made us Turkish coffee. I expressed to Sanya my concerns about damaging my relationship with Nenad, she told me I had no need to worry as the Romani musicians are accustomed to media attention.

Sanya asked me some questions about my impressions of Vranje. I told her that I thought it was a beautiful place. She asked what my first impression of the Roma neighborhood was. What do I say? A lot poorer than the rest of Vranje? Segregated from the rest of the city? I could offend both the Roma and the Serbians at the same time. I told her that the first thing that struck me was how kind, warm and hospitable the people were.

Sanya: "Why Vranje?"

MK: "Well, I heard that there are a lot of brass bands here."

Sanya: "How did I hear of Vranje?"

MK: "A friend, Alex Markovic, who also researched the music here, suggested that I come."

Sanya: "Is one month long enough for academic research?"

MK: "No, but it is enough to start with. I intend to make it a lifelong study."

Sanya: “How did the band make you feel when you heard them?”

MK: “It was really exciting. It made my hair stand on end.”

Sanya: “What are the university attitudes towards the music?”

MK: “Most people I’ve met like the music when they hear it although some are elitist towards it; they think that classical music is the only music.”

Sanya went on to explain to me how Vranje is like a crossroads between Kosovo, Macedonia and Bulgaria and therefore open to a lot of influences. She explained that Macedonia is strong for singers, Bulgaria is strong for dancing, and Serbia is strong for instruments. Sanya was training to be a teacher, but was also a reporter. She also sang in a choir. I told her that she knew a lot about music and asked if I could interview her some time. She agreed.[3] Sanya explained that brass bands are big in Serbia. When I told her I played in a brass band in Britain, she was surprised. She thought that only Serbia had brass bands.

After the interview, Sanya told me that she would like to see my children. I brought them down and they played. Sanya explained that she was one of four children, although that is unusual nowadays, most people only have one or two children. She took our picture and this picture was used in the published article.[4]

My interest in Romani music came about through a number of different sources. Since hearing Bartók’s string quartets at college when I was seventeen, I have always been interested in Eastern European music. Now and again in England, I would hear some wild brass playing on the radio played at a breathtaking tempo. I never had an opportunity to write down who was playing it and thus it remained a mystery to me. In 2006, I moved to Qatar on the Arabian Peninsula. At around that time Gogol Bordello burst onto the scene and started the Gypsy Punk

[3] Unfortunately, I never managed to arrange an interview with Sanya.
[4] See appendix for the original article and translation.

movement. As a fan of both rock and punk music I was instantly drawn to the music and started researching Gogol Bordello's influences. From there, I bought an album by German DJ, Shantel, who remixed music by Goran Bregović, the father and son trumpet duo Boban and Marko Marković, Fanfare Ciocărlia, and Taraf de Haidouks, all giants in the Romani music world. Living in Qatar, many of my friends were Lebanese, and were also listening to a lot of music by Goran Bregović, especially the soundtrack to Emir Kusturica's movie, *Underground*. I realize now that perhaps the Lebanese attraction to this music was its similarity to Arabic and Turkish music, of which Lebanon, a former province of the Ottoman Empire, has a tradition.

Since starting my doctorate in trumpet performance at Michigan State University, I have desired to research this topic further. In 2013, I learned from my trumpet professor, Rich Illman, of a Balkan style band, *Kavazabava*, that had recently formed at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, MI. I promptly arranged to visit the band and their leader, Mike Romaniak.[5] Mike introduced me to various other artists from Eastern Europe, and wrote out some tunes to help me get started in forming my own band. Mike visited Michigan State University and presented a workshop on Balkan music. From there, I founded *Slavistar* at Michigan State University, a Roma style brass band. With many changes of personnel, *Slavistar* currently consists of a trumpet (me), saxophone, trombone, tuba, electric guitar and drums. Leading *Slavistar* has required me to listen to Romani music, transcribe, create arrangements, and direct performances. Through transcribing I have developed an understanding of the musical language of Romani brass music and how it relates to western music.

[5] Grand Central Magazine, "Kavazabava: CMU's Gypsy Band," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSt9jQCsovU (accessed 4 January, 2018). Mike Romaniak graduated from Central Michigan University and moved back to Toronto. *Kavazabava* is still going strong however, and from the video you can see that *Kavazabava* remain popular and include a lot of musicians from the university.

In 2014 and 2017, I attended Goldenfest in Brooklyn, NY. Goldenfest is a festival of Eastern European music, where many American and Eastern European musicians perform. Also, in summer 2014, I attended the Iroquois Springs Balkan Music and Dance workshop, a ten-day long camp where I participated in classes on brass music and the darabuka (hand drum). During this camp, I had the opportunity to meet and interview members of the Zlatne Uste Brass Band, one of the most famous Balkan-style brass bands in the U.S., who have travelled to Serbia on several occasions and starred in the film documentary, *Brasslands.* I also met Carol Silverman, a scholar of Romani music and culture, whose book, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora,* is one of the main sources of literature for this study.[6] Upon speaking with Carol Silverman, I told her that I was interested in traveling to Serbia or Romania to study the brass band music. Carol recommended that I go to Vranje, in the south of Serbia, as there were many brass bands in that small region. She told me that brass bands were no longer as common in Romania, and Fanfare Ciocărlia is the only brass band in the isolated village of Zece Prăjini. Carol recommended a trumpet player that I should contact, and arrange to meet him and take lessons. She told me that he would be an excellent choice as he spoke English. She also, recommended that I take my family with me, as it would help break down some barriers as a western researcher entering an exceptionally family-oriented culture.

I made contact with Carol's recommendation through Facebook and arranged to make contact with the trumpet player by telephone and arranged to meet him at the end of July 2015. On July 22, 2015, my family and I arrived in Belgrade and stayed in a hostel for three nights. During this time, I was able to talk with the locals about Serbian music and the place of Romani

[6] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

music in the country. Staying in the country, I was curious about all of the music there, what people typically listened to, and how they viewed Romani music.

As I described in the introduction, I did not actually make contact with the trumpet player I had initially communicated with, but ended up working with Nenad and Stefan Mladenović, a father and son duo with a great reputation in Serbia. I had a unique experience with the Mladenović family who welcomed my family and me into their lives and not only did we become friends, I was able to see firsthand their culture and relationship with both the Roma community and Serbian community. It was also extremely challenging however, due to my limited knowledge of Serbian. I often wonder what my experience would have been like had I met up with the first trumpet player who could speak English and was accustomed to working with westerners.

Reflections on Identity History and Methodology

During my time in Vranje, I kept detailed field notes of what I noticed on a daily basis, not just concerning Romani music, but also of Serbia itself. In making field notes I followed the model outlined by Gregory Barz by maintaining a fluid balance between my field research (experience), field notes (reflections), and ethnography (interpretation).[7] The reflections of my experiences, and those interpretations, are by nature subjective, but important nonetheless, and those interpretations are open to change as my experience and knowledge grew. In writing my field notes, I was able to further my understanding and not only record, but also illuminate my

[7] Gregory F. Barz, "Confronting the Field(Note) In and Out of the Field," in *Shadows in the Field : New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology,* ed. Gregory F. Barz, and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press (US), 2008), 206-223.

lived experience through writing about it.[8] These experiences were not limited to my time with Romani musicians, but my time in Serbia and all the people I met, and what I observed around me in the environment and media, such as television and radio. As a result, I acquired a rich understanding of Serbian life, culture, Serbian attitudes towards Roma and vice versa, and attitudes towards the West.

I conducted my research in the manner of what Nicole Beaudry describes as a participant observer,[9] actively trying to play and learn Romani music with the locals and sharing my own music and experiences. This helped build field relations with the Romani musicians through common ground. Having my wife and four children was also a key factor in building field relations. It is worth remembering that Serbia belonged to the former communist republic of Yugoslavia and, although many Serbs look back on the communist regime as a golden era, it was still a totalitarian regime with tight government control.[10] That I was required to take all of our passports to the local police station on arrival is an indication of how such control still remains in Serbian society.

In addition to writing fieldnotes, I video and audio recorded interviews and music that I heard and took photographs. As a participant observer, learning the music and performance style of Romani musicians, I focused on learning styles, aesthetic values in terms of musicality, the musicians' relationships with both the Serbian and Romani community, and what they liked and disliked about being musicians.[11]

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[8] Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 63.
[9] Nicole Beaudry, "The Challenges of Human Relations in Ethnographic Inquiry: Examples from Arctic and Subarctic Fieldwork," in *Shadows in the Field : New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology,* ed. Gregory F. Barz, and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press (US), 2008), 224-246.
[10] Jim Samson, *Music in the Balkans,* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 468.
[11] Please see Appendix 1, interview questions.

Once I had transcribed all of the interviews, examined my field notes and published literature, I was able to analyze the data. Using a technique described by Rubin and Rubin as "weighing and combining", I became aware of emerging themes and synthesized different explanations of the same concept into a single narrative.[12] As I was actively involved as a musician, learning Romani music, and on one occasion playing with their band, I have inserted my own narrative into the analysis. The narrative is also illuminating to anyone embarking on ethnographic research and the challenges it entails. This method of inserting my own narrative into the analysis is what Laurel Richardson describes as "layered text."[13] As part of this narrative, I have crystallized the data either with the different subjects of my research, my own observations, and how it relates to published literature to further add "legitimacy" to my research. I choose the term "crystallize" over "triangulate" to recognize the many perspectives and angles ethnographic research can take, with different reflections externally and refractions internally, that paradoxically provide a deeper understanding of a topic subject to doubt and interpretation.[14]

In writing my results I have considered that my audience may not be limited solely to musicians, but ethnographers and anthropologists, or lay persons with an interest in music from the Balkans. Therefore, I have attempted to make my writing more accessible to the various

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[12] Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data,* 2nd ed., (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005), 227 - 229. "Weighing and Combining" is where various events or explanations can be combined to arrive at the same conclusion. For example, there may be an article describing Romani brass music as a hybrid between western and eastern music, then in an interview the informant may tell me that he listens to jazz music and Turkish music and combines them both in his playing, and then a musical analysis will show traits of both western and eastern musical devices.

[13] Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, "Writing: A Method of Inquiry." In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 3rd ed., ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005), 517-518.

[14] Laurel Richardson, "Writing: A Method of Inquiry." In *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials,* 2nd ed., ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003), 517-518.

audiences it may interest, providing historical, ethnographic, and musical analysis.[15] Denzin and Lincoln liken the researcher to a "quilt maker or a jazz improviser. The quilter stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience."[16] As such I have quoted each person I interviewed directly and as closely as possible with the aid of a translator, in an attempt to allow his or her own voices to come through. Researching only Romani brass bands in Serbia, in isolation, would not give the complete picture, as the music is informed and influenced by bands from other Balkan countries and other genres and in the Balkans. Similarly, the history of the Balkans and Europe is vital to gaining better understanding of Serbian culture, and its relationship with music.

Upon my return to the United States, I still felt that I had some gaps in my research. Nenad and his family's command of English was limited, and my command of Serbian was worse. I read the body of limited literature available to find answers and still could not figure out some of aspects of the Romani musical language. I decided to contact a Romani Macedonian clarinet player, Ismail Lumanovski, whose music I had been introduced to by my jazz trumpet professor, Etienne Charles. Although Ismail was neither a trumpet player nor Serbian, he was from a neighboring country.[17] As a graduate of The Julliard School and English-speaking, I felt he might be able to provide me with some answers. We met in a cafe in Queens, New York City, and he was able to give both a musical and ethnomusicological insight into Romani music.

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[15] Margery Wolf, *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism and Ethnographic Responsibility,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 136. This book served as an inspiration for me in my approach to ethnographic writing. In an effort to reach a broader audience, Wolf presents her research three different ways: as a short story, as fieldnotes, and as a scientific journal article.

[16] Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research." In *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry,* 2nd ed., ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003), 6 - 9.

[17] Serbia's border with Macedonia is only about thirty miles away from Vranje.

Challenges of Research

The NATO bombings of the 1990s were still fresh in Serbian minds, leaving a great deal of resentment. Many people voiced their bitterness towards the United States and Britain regarding the war. For example, I recorded an incident in my field notes when I was visiting the Vranje town center with, Mirko, the landlord to the apartment we were renting. Mirko met one of his friends and introduced me to him. The man told me, "Prefer not the Americans." I told him that I was English and my wife was American, he told me it was a bad mix: "The bombings you know. You understand." Mirko told his friend that it was not my fault. Such occurrences happened to me more when I was without my family, and with Serbian men.

Although I was aware that my outsider status might prove a barrier to my research, I did not realize how difficult it would be to build field relations. Although I never felt that people suspected me for a spy, a common problem in ethnography, there was a period early on where I felt my diligence to visit Gornja Čačija appeared "suspect" to our new friends. I had to work hard to build trust and friendship.[18] Thanks to my wife and four small children, we managed to endear ourselves to most people that we met, especially the women in the Mladenović family. Nenad actually told me how glad he was that his wife had my wife for a friend. These connections obviously counted in my favor. We were also featured with Nenad on a twenty-minute segment of a morning news program and numerous people in the community called out to us on the streets recognizing us from the program.

[18] Martin Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 80.

Hammersley and Atkinson, in their book *Ethnography,* advocate for "impression management" to reduce distinct differences with those in the field.[19] Despite our modest resources as a family and using a Romani taxi driver, there was a barrier of perceived social and economic status. The Mladenović family was relatively wealthy compared to the surrounding poverty in the Roma neighborhood. By the second night with the Mladenović family, Nenad was asking a lot of questions about money such as how much did it cost to come to Serbia and how much I made? From my travel experiences, there is an assumption from less economically stable countries such as Serbia that all westerners, and in our case, Americans, are wealthy. Such an assumption is understandable considering the impression of the United States given by the entertainment industry.[20]

Although my four children were helpful in breaking down barriers, having such a large family in Serbia was rare and made us distinctly different, and also gave the impression of wealth. To try and alleviate this socio-economic barrier, I had to explain the financial difficulties of being a graduate student with a handful of part-time jobs. There were also implications of paying Nenad to help me, which, by IRB guidelines is not allowed, and further reinforcing the difference of socio-economic status. Nenad told me towards the end of our visit that people come from all over to learn from him and pay him a lot of money, but he liked my family and me and that is why he decided to help me. On parting, he called me Matthew Mladenović.

[19] Ibid., 83-92.
[20] There was another occasion were the perception of wealth created a problem for me; this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Hybridity

During the 1980s, Bulgaria followed a monoethnic doctrine of promoting pure Bulgarian folk music.[21] The Bulgarian state banned influences that were not considered to be purely Bulgarian or related to the Islamic world such as the folk instrument, the Zurna, which was considered to be Turkish.[22] Given the movement of people and races throughout history, claims of purity seem unrealistic, prejudiced, and in Bulgaria's case, fueled by the state's nationalist propaganda machine. Paradoxically, claims of hybridity can be equally unrealistic if one takes the position that all cultures are hybrid, and then there is no distinction between hybridity and non-hybridity. Therefore, hybridity can occur on various levels and appear in contrast of less hybrid contexts, that is, some cultural practices are more hybrid than others.[23]

The concept of hybridity causes further problems when applied to social or ethnic groups such as the Roma. Amassing a group under the description of hybrid takes away the individuality of the people, their culture, and specific identities.[24] As a diasporic group the Roma take on many different cultural practices, therefore the hybridity of Romani music in Bulgaria may be very different from that in Hungary. Together with labeling a group or their cultural practices as hybrid, there is a risk of placing Roma in a global context: an ethnic diasporic group that is swallowed up by the modern, more progressive, host nations, forced to assimilate and adopt the

[21] Béla Bartók, *The Hungarian Folk Song* ed. Benjamin Suchoff, trans. M.D. Calvocoressi. Annotated by Zoltán Kodály (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981), 99. Bartók, in his book on Hungarian Folk Song, elevates the Hungarian peasant songs over other folk music, especially that which he categorizes as "Gipsy music". He claims that for clarity's sake, and for his studies to remain scientific and avoid confusion, Hungarian peasant music must be studied in isolation.
[22] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 128-148.
[23] Ibid., 42.
[24] Ibid., 43.

practices of their superiors in their own way.[25] Such a view dismisses the individual identity of the Roma and neglects to acknowledge the persecution and marginalization they have faced over the centuries.

These narratives underscore the essentially hybrid nature of not only Romani music, but also all Balkan music. With nationalist, colonialist, and elitist scholarly forces at work, distinctions have been made between pure, and therefore superior forms of music, and that of hybrid forms, usually performed by marginalized groups.[26] These distinctions appear in autocratic regimes, society and universities in so-called developed countries. Consider the emphasis placed on western classical music in American and European universities and the marginalizing of other genres.[27]

Colonialism and its Impact on Brass Bands

To examine the hybridity of Romani brass music in Serbia and throughout the world, it is worth exploring some historical background of Roma, Serbia, its neighboring Balkan states, and brass bands in general. In his book, *Brass Unbound: Secret Children of the Colonial Brass Band,* Rob Flaes argues that the European military band came to fruition about the same time that colonialism reached its height in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Along with colonial domination, the military or brass band also became the musical format for missionaries and

[25] Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitanism, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 6.
[26] Rob Boonzajer Flaes, *Brass Unbound: Secret Children of the Colonial Brass Band* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 2000), 9-21.
[27] I refer to my own personal experiences, having attended five universities in the U.K. and U.S.

Christian organizations such as the Salvation Army.[28] Brass and military bands brought order; they represented Western superiority and might. Indigenous musicians were forced to dispense with their indigenous instruments in return for the western brass instruments as part of the civilization process.[29] To the chagrin of the colonizers, indigenous musicians adopted the instruments and music that they learned from their colonizers, and used those to perform their own music, creating a transcultural hybrid musical form.

Although I come from Great Britain, probably the most prolific colonial nation, I can relate to how brass bands brought order and how hybridity emerged from brass bands, arguably more so than other mediums in the country. The first brass bands (without woodwinds) were formed in Britain when Mossley Temperance Band purchased a set of saxhorns from Adolphe Sax and won the Belle Vue Band Contest in 1853, playing the *Hallelujah Chorus* from Handel's *Messiah*.[30] Much of the repertoire of the British brass band was arrangements of operas and orchestral works. As time progressed, brass bands embraced other genres such as polkas, jazz, and pop music.

British brass bands were often sponsored by mills and coal mines to occupy the workers in more wholesome activities than getting drunk, hence the reason why many bands were named temperance bands. Brass instruments have the advantage of being relatively sturdy and low maintenance. Furthermore, in the British brass band, all the instrumental parts were written in treble clef, regardless of pitch, (with the exception of the bass trombone, which was in bass clef) and all instruments operated the same fingering. As a result, players were able to move from

[28] Rob Boonzajer Flaes, *Brass Unbound: Secret Children of the Colonial Brass Band* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 2000), 9-21.
[29] Ibid., 11.
[30] Ray Farr, *The Distin Legacy: The Rise of the Brass Band in 19th-Century Britain,* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 155.

instrument to instrument with ease should there be a vacancy in any area. The importance given to competitions also served as a way to advertize companies and when bands won competitions this helped elevate the stature of the company. I played for the Yorkshire Building Society Band[31]. At that time that, several of the best brass bands in the country were sponsored by building societies. Yorkshire Building Society wanted to be known as the best building society in the country and therefore invested a lot of money into paying for the best players to join the band, so the band could win competitions and be known as the best band in the country. The sponsorship meant the band members had lots of financial benefits and were hosted in luxury hotels, but it also meant that there was an enormous pressure on the band to win competitions and players who underperformed were dismissed on a regular basis.[32]

The motive of using brass bands to display status was similar in Serbia. According to the Guča Trumpet Festival website, the birth of the Serbian brass band may be traced back to 1831 when the Serbian Prince, Miloš Obrenović, ordered his Turkish musical director, Josif Šlezinger, to form the first military band, Knjaževsko-Serbska Banda, and adopted a musical style popular among central European orchestras.[33] Šlezinger was also responsible for advancing music in Serbia to compete with any other European country. He founded and directed orchestras, military bands, choirs, composed and arranged music, and taught musicians.[34] As a result, Šlezinger was influential on most aspects of Serbian music including songs and musical drama. Czech bandmasters were also prominent in the north of Serbia. As brass bands spread throughout

[31] A building society is the British equivalent of a Credit Union in the United States.
[32] During the six years that I played with the Yorkshire Building Society Band I saw many players come and go. After winning the European Brass Band Championships one year, I remember that around five players were fired after the competition.
[33] Jelena Gligorijević, "World Music Festivals and Tourism: a Case Study of Serbia's Guča Trumpet Festival," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 2 (2014): 140.
[34] Mark Forry, "Serbia", in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music,* ed. Timothy Rice, James Porter and Chris Goertzen, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 947-948.

Serbian villages and absorbed their local musical traditions, a hybridity emerged between Western European tradition and the Turkish influences of the Ottoman Empire, Šlezinger, Turkish military "Janissary" bands, and Romani musicians. Three distinctive styles emerged in different parts of Serbia: the Zlatibor-Dragačevo style in southwest Serbia where the Guča Trumpet Festival is held; the Vlach style in north east Serbia; and the Vranje style, which is mainly dominated by Romani musicians.[35] There will be more detailed discussion on the Turkish and western influences on Romani brass bands in Chapter Two.

Although Serbia may not be considered a colonized country, it did fall under the imperial influences of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires.[36] The brass bands reflect this hybridity and vary in style between various areas of Serbia. In the west and north of Serbia, their style is highly technical, but in duple meter with western harmonic progressions and a polka-style accompaniment. In the south of Serbia, which is dominated by the Roma, the music varies in meter with irregular meters being commonplace. The tonality is more Ottoman-influenced and there is usually a freely improvised central section called the taksim that is common to Turkish music.

Brass bands are a part of rural life in Serbia and play at weddings, baptisms, births, farewell parties, and church festivals.[37] The music is intended for dancing and the dances vary from region to region. In the north of Serbia, the *kolo* is the main form of dance where both men

[35] Jelena Gligorijević, "World Music Festivals and Tourism: a Case Study of Serbia's Guča Trumpet Festival," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 2 (2014): 140. A CD compilation of the Guča Trumpet Festival that I bought at the festival also divides each band up in to the same regions listed above.
[36] That we may not consider Serbia, or other European countries as colonized, it should give us cause to re-examine how we view colonization. One could make a case that most countries have fallen under an empires' control at some point in their history: for example, most of Europe under the Roman Empire.
[37] Guca Trumpet Festival Official Website. http://www.guca.rs/history/ (accessed January 21, 2019)

and women dance in a closed circle with small rhythmic shakes.[38] In the south of Serbia, the *oro* is more popular,[39] which is danced in an open circle with men and women separate and flamboyant gestures and squats.[40]

Serbia - A Brief History and Background, and its Relations to Neighboring States

To fully understand Romani music in Serbia, and my positioning as an ethnomusicologist, I need to discuss the background of Serbia's complicated past, the various ethnic tensions that exist, and how the history of Serbia affects Serbians now. Donna Buchanan explains this concept of ethnohistoricism as the "attention to ethnographically solicited perceptions of the past, whether connected to historical events, customs, or conceptualizations of tradition".[41] Serbia's geography is also inextricably linked to its history: Serbia is a landlocked country at a crossroads between the East and the West, and on an important trade route between Europe and Asia. The Danube River runs through Serbia and into the Black Sea. Due to its location, Serbia and its surrounding provinces have become historically a hotly contested battleground and home to various ethnicities. The term ethnicity, in this context, is used to describe cultural groups that self-identify on common traits such as language, religion,

[38] Mark Forry, "Serbia", in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music,* ed. Timothy Rice, James Porter and Chris Goertzen, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 941.
[39] Ibid., 947.
[40] Here is an example of a Gilansko Paro, a specific form of oro at a wedding in Vranje. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Een9ix-NJA (accessed January 21, 2019)
[41] Donna Buchanan, *Performing Democracy: Bulgarian Music and Musicians in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 27.

geography, tribes, or inter-marital relationships.[42] The ethnic identities, differences and resultant tensions in the Balkans can mainly be attributed to language or dialects, and religion.

The Serbs, a Slavic race, settled in the Balkans at the beginning of the seventh century as military allies to the Byzantine Empire.[43] They developed a Byzantine-Slavic culture and adopted Christianity. The Cyrillic alphabet was created in Serbia for Holy Scriptures and the connection with the Orthodox church became an important part of the Serb identity, where they have great pride in their past.[44] By the 12th century the Serbs had their own kingdom.[45] From thereon, the Serb kingdom turned into an empire, expanding their territory to have access to three seas: the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, and Adriatic Sea.[46] In the late fourteenth century, other Slavic principalities arose such as the Kingdom of Bosnia and Duchy of Herzegovina, yet they failed to unite in the wars against the Ottoman Empire. The Battle of Kosovo in 1389 was a defining moment in Serb history. Despite suffering a devastating defeat, Serbs view the battle as a moral and spiritual victory, refusing to flee from the enemy and killing the enemy leader.[47] After the Battle of Kosovo however, many Serbs migrated north and west to the modern-day Austrian border, Slovenia, and Croatia to escape Ottoman control.

Serbia became caught up in further conflicts between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empire. Belgrade changed hands between the two Empires between 1688 and 1791 in ferocious battles and the Ottoman rule became increasingly brutal. The Habsburg rule was the lesser of two evils for the Serbs and they sought refuge in southern Hungary and the province north of Belgrade

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[42] Eliot Bates, *Music in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.
[43] Lara Žmukić, *Culture Smart! Serbia* (London: Kuperard, 2012), 26.
[44] Ronelle Alexander, *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian - A Grammar With Sociolinguistic Commentary* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 416.
[45] Ibid., 27.
[46] Ibid., 27-28.
[47] Ronelle Alexander, *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian - A Grammar With Sociolinguistic Commentary* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 416.

known today as Vojvodina. There the Serbs were initially granted religious tolerance but this soon faded as they were pressured to convert to Catholocism, this led to Serbian appeals to Russia to send Orthodox teachers and clergy.[48]

After a series of national uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, Serbia was an independent state by the end of the nineteenth century. The Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 saw other Balkan states such as Greece, Bulgaria, and Montenegro, gain independence from the Ottoman Empire. Serbia expanded its territory to Kosovo, Macedonia, and Raška. Alliances were being made across Europe: Austria-Hungary were allying with Germany with sights on expansion into the Middle East and eradicating Serbia; Russia, nervous of the Austro-Hungarian-German alliance backed Serbia; Britain and France, also concerned with the German foreign policy, made alliances with Serbia.[49]

In 1914, Gavrilo Princip, a Serb nationalist, assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, an event that was the catalyst that sparked the First World War. Although the German advance into Belgium and France, and the subsequent trench warfare on the Western Front, tend to dominate First World War historiography, the fighting in the Balkans was equally devastating, and had a profound impact on the future of the region. The German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian allied attack on Serbia caused the Serbs to flee through Albania to Greece at great cost of life. By the end of the First World War the Serbs eventually succeeded in recovering their territory and expanding it northwards into parts of southern Hungary and in the south with Kosovo and Macedonia, but the loss of life was

[48] Ibid.
[49] Lara Žmukić, *Culture Smart! Serbia* (London: Kuperard, 2012), 33.

estimated at one million, more than a quarter of their population in 1914 and more than half of their male population.[50]

Understandably, with such a heavy loss, Serbia felt they had earned a prominent role in the new unified Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.[51] The policies of the new state were Serbo-centric and the official language of the government was Serbian-based; despite being called Serbo-Croatian, Croatians rejected the term as artificial.[52] Many Serbs still lived outside the central state of Serbia in the surrounding countries, motivating the need for these countries to unite.[53] In 1929, the leader of the Serb majority shot five members of the Croatian Peasant Party. The opposition withdrew from parliament and the Serbian King Aleksander Karadjordjević created his own dictatorship, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

After the Great Depression hit, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia became increasingly dependent on Nazi Germany, but by the outbreak of the Second World War there was public resistance to Nazi support and a coup d'état led to Yugoslavian withdrawal of support from the Nazis. With all the surrounding countries except Greece being allied with Nazi Germany, Hitler retaliated and attacked Yugoslavia. Central Serbia became a puppet state, and Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina became the fascist Independent State of Croatia. Internal fighting broke out within Serbia between the pro-Nazi Serbian General Nedić, royalist Četniks, and Josip Tito's Communist Partisans. Nazi concentration camps were set up and approximately 40,000 Serbian Jews, Roma, and resistance fighters were massacred.[54] In the Independent State of Croatia,

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[50] Ibid., 34.
[51] Ronelle Alexander, *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian - A Grammar With Sociolinguistic Commentary* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 418.
[52] Ronelle Alexander, *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian - A Grammar With Sociolinguistic Commentary* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 418.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Lara Žmukić, *Culture Smart! Serbia* (London: Kuperard, 2012), 36-37.

between 320,000 and 340,00 ethnic Serbs domiciled in Croatia and Bosnia were massacred, many of them in the brutal concentration camp in Jasenovac, where prisoners were tortured, starved or killed at will.[55]

The Communist Partisan party managed to unite the different ethnic groups in a consolidated effort against the Nazis and by 1945 Yugoslavia was liberated with a loss of approximately one million people. After the war ended, Tito ruled Yugoslavia up until his death in 1980. He distanced himself from the USSR and developed his own style of socialism, which included western capitalist influences. His ethos for the state was "bratstvo i jedinstvo" (brotherhood and unity), where the emphasis in reality was more on unity than brotherhood.[56] Tito suppressed political opponents, mainly Stalinists, but overall Serbs remember Tito's rule with nostalgia when people had work, and there were relaxed policies on freedom of speech and religion.[57] The sense of brotherhood helped certain Romani musicians flourish, such as the famous Macedonian-Romani singer Esma Redžepova, who was invited by Tito to an international gathering of world leaders and subsequently sent abroad as a cultural ambassador for Yugoslavia.[58]

Following Tito's death, the various Yugoslav republics began seeking their own interests. Yugoslavia was mired with economic problems and each republic refused to pay federal taxes. When Slobodan Milošević became president in 1989, he tightened control, favoring Serb interests, especially in those republics were Serbs were under-represented such as Kosovo and

[55] Holocaust Encyclopedia, "Jasenovac," https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jasenovac (accessed January 20th, 2019)
[56] Ronelle Alexander, *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian - A Grammar With Sociolinguistic Commentary* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 413.
[57] Lara Žmukić, *Culture Smart! Serbia* (London: Kuperard, 2012), 37-39.
[58] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 210.

Croatia. During this period, each group developed a sense of strong nationalism and Serbs were reduced to a "national minority" in Croatia, recollecting strong memories of the persecution Serbs suffered during the Second World War. In 1991, a series of wars broke out after Croatia and Slovenia declared independence. The wars continued until the NATO intervention in 1999, which was mainly directed at Serbia. In 2001, Milošević was arrested by Serb forces for electoral fraud and corruption. Many political leaders, army generals, police, and soldiers from all ethnicities were tried for war crimes.

Although there remains a strong sense of nationalism and resentment towards NATO for the bombings, Serbia has remained peaceful. Many people who I spoke to seemed to have a genuine desire to build relations with someone from the West and perhaps alter any perceptions the West has of Serbia. Most people had a story to tell about the NATO bombings. Ivica, the policeman who took me to the Roma neighborhood, told me how a three-year-old girl was killed in the bathroom in Belgrade by a bomb.[59] This naturally was distressing for me to hear, having three young daughters and a son with me. The bombing was what would euphemistically be called "collateral damage", such an impersonal term for the loss of innocent life. Ivica naturally could not understand how a little girl was considered a military target. I did not comment; only listened. Antonia, Nenad's daughter, also told us how frightened they were during the bombings. Several people including Mirko's son, Nikola, expressed how he considered both Bill Clinton and Tony Blair to be war criminals.

Although I remember the conflict in the news and I had a cousin who was stationed in the British Army in Yugoslavia at the time (a fact I never disclosed), I was not aware of all the

[59] William M. Arkin, "Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign," *Human Rights Watch,* 12, no. 1 (D) (February 2000). https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2000/nato/natopic4.html (accessed January 21, 2019). This is the picture of the house that the girl was killed in.

details. I decided to study the Human Rights Watch report on the military action by NATO while I was in Serbia. The report acknowledged that the intentions of NATO were to halt the ethnic cleansing by the Serbs and minimize loss of human life. Several mistakes were made including attacks on refugees and unarmed civilians. The report also noted that the Yugoslav (Serbian) government reported that approximately one hundred inmates were killed at the Dubrava penitentiary complex in Kosovo and around 200 were injured as a result of the NATO bombings. Further investigation by the Human Rights Watch determined that the casualties were more likely the responsibility of the Yugoslav forces that fired upon 1000 inmates and threw grenades at them, and then blamed NATO.[60]

All the places that I stayed at or visited (Belgrade, Čačak, Surdulica and Vranje) had been attacked by NATO and suffered civilian casualties. I was not aware of the extent of the casualties, or how close I was to the blood that had been shed only fifteen years before my arrival. In hindsight, I should have been more aware of the situation and how this positioned me as a researcher.

Roma - Historical Background

Etymological evidence shows that the Roma originated from India and migrated westwards in waves between 1000 and 1300 AD. The first written mention of Roma was in the *Shah Namah* (Book of Kings) by Persian poet, Ferdowsi.[61] The reason for the Romani diaspora is unclear, but there is evidence proving that Roma had settled in Eastern Europe by the

[60] William M. Arkin, "Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign," *Human Rights Watch,* 12, no. 1 (D) (February 2000). https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2000/nato/index.htm (accessed January 21, 2019)
[61] Ioana Bunescu, *Roma in Europe: the politics of collective identity formation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 13-26.

fourteenth century and in Western Europe by the fifteenth century.[62] There were and are different varieties of Roma groups, each with variations of language and certain social customs. Some groups were nomadic such as those in Western Europe and some were sedentary, more so in Eastern Europe. The Roma are commonly known as "Gypsies", a term sometimes used derogatorily by outsiders, or by the Roma ironically to describe how outsiders view them[63], or sometimes the term Gypsy is used by Roma with pride as a part of their identity. For centuries the Roma have been marginalized and have earned mythical representations of sorcery, free spirits, and thievery.[64] The Roma became renowned for their musical prowess, and have used and adapted their music as a commercial enterprise for Romani and non-Romani patrons.

The lack of a singular homeland has made the Roma a target of persecution throughout their history in Europe. Records of slavery date from 1348 to their emancipation in 1856.[65] In 1510, Switzerland imposed the death penalty for Gypsies living in the country and other countries followed suit shortly after. Further persecution included removing children from families, beatings, physical mutilations, and bounties for capturing or killing Roma. The most horrifying and devastating plight for the Roma was the Holocaust at the hands of the Nazis, where between 500,000 to 1.5 million Roma were murdered, representing between one quarter and one fifth of their population.[66] Since the Second World War, the Roma have struggled to gain acknowledgement as victims of the Holocaust, suffering further persecution in the communist Eastern European countries. In Bulgaria, Roma were forced to change Muslim names

[62] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.
[63] Ibid., 3-20.
[64] Ibid., 3-12.
[65] Ioana Bunescu, *Roma in Europe: the politics of collective identity formation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, 14.
[66] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3-12.

to Slavic names and Romani music was prohibited. In Czechoslovakia, forced sterilization was commonplace. In Yugoslavia, Tito, the dictator President of Yugoslavia, encouraged acceptance of different ethnicities such as Roma, albeit hierarchical with Roma near the bottom. The acceptance and cultural diversity did allow Romani music to flourish in Yugoslavia including the rise and stardom of Romani singers such as Esma Redžepova.

Today, Roma are the largest minority in Europe. They still face segregated housing and schools, continued discrimination with unemployment at 80 percent in some areas, and the lowest standard of living.[67] As recently as 2010, France was forcibly deporting Romani people back to Romania despite being EU citizens.[68] In Italy there have been harrowing reports of Romani being abused, beaten, and murdered by both the police and civilians.[69]

The geographic origins, travels, and settlements of the Roma people, their diaspora, slavery, persecution and marginalization, all are factors influencing the music that they create. As Roma are limited to menial occupations such as factory or janitorial work, or begging, performing music is a prestigious and esteemed career for Roma. Their reputation as musicians is long established. Classical greats, Franz Liszt and Joseph Joachim, both expressed admiration for the Gypsy musicians they encountered in Hungary during the nineteenth century.[70] The necessity to make money from music and entertain audiences from different regions means that the Roma adopt many different styles and genres; this will be discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapters.

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[67] Ibid.
[68] BBC News, "France Sends Roma Gypsies Back To Romania," http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11020429 (accessed March 14, 2017)
[69] Bernard Roke, "From the Archives: the Italian File 1997 - 2000," European Roma Rights Center Blog, entry posted October 13, 2014, http://www.errc.org/blog/from-the-archives-the-italian-file-1997-2000/9
[70] Bálint Sárosi, *Gypsy Music* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1978), 128.

Chapter 2. Guča, Traditions, and Injuries

Thursday 29th July – Nenad's backyard, the evening after our first visit

We arrived at 6 pm at Nenad's home. I managed to buy some cookies, chips and pop as gifts and something that would hopefully keep our children from getting too hungry. That day had not gone as planned; we had a house in New York state that we were trying to sell and there was a lot of paperwork that we had to take care of. I wished I could focus on what I came here to do. I was anxious about being on time to Nenad's rehearsal although I suspected it may have started late. You can usually guarantee that when you arrive late, everyone has started and is wondering where you are. The rehearsal had not started and Nenad did not seem as relaxed as he did the night before.

Nenad asked me to play. I played J.B. Arban's Carnival of Venice. They were impressed, especially Stephen, the third trumpet player in the band who I had not met before. Nenad asked me to play something Serbian. I played "Underground Čoček", a popular tune from the movie soundtrack, *Underground,* by Goran Bregović. Stefan played with me correcting me on some of the notes. I told them that I did not know many Serbian tunes but I wanted to learn. Stefan said that he wanted to teach me. I felt disappointed in myself that I did not know more music; I wanted to prepare more before coming but it is getting harder and harder with raising a family of young children to concentrate on such things. Stefan tried my different mouthpieces. He liked my shallow mouthpiece.

Other band members began to arrive and there was a lot of arguing, although I have noticed that in Serbia, conversations seem to be more animated to my western ears. Martin, Stefan's younger brother, lived in Germany but was visiting his family. He explained to me that one of the tenor horn players had dropped out. They did not know why and they needed to leave for Guca in a week. Nenad calls the tenor horn player on the phone and has it on speakerphone

for the rest of the band to listen in. A woman answered. The phone call was short and there was a lot of tutting from other members in the band. The tenor horn player would not speak to Nenad.

They argued for two hours. I told Stefan that if Nenad is the best it should not be too difficult to get someone to play with him. He disagreed with me. The arguing continued. Nenad washed his hands frequently from the outside spigot. There are occasional smiles and laughter, especially from Fabijan, the drummer; he seems to have a good sense of humor. In the end I learn that they have found someone, but they just need to ask him. During the arguing, Nenad shoots me the occasional glance and smiles as if to reassure me.

We had coffee and Nenad told me to play. I start playing a Jewish tune that Mike Romaniak taught me. They stoped me and tried to either correct me or get me to play something else. Nenad told me to play Kalishnikov. I tell him I can't:

Nenad: "You don't know it?"

MK: "Yes, I know it to listen to but I can't play it. Can you teach it to me?"

Nenad taught it to me phrase by phrase. I wish I could have caught the phrases quicker; I felt that he got frustrated with how slow I am. It really helps to listen to how he does the ornamentations: there are lower mordents as well as upper mordents and the articulations between the ornamentations are different from what I thought. Nenad uses a lot of alternate fingering on the trumpet. For example, notes such as "A" are typically played with the first and second valves pressed down together, but it can also be played with the third valve pressed down. I will often use the third valve when the A is the third of the chord in the context of the music, as the tuning is flatter than when it is played with the first and second fingers. There is a lot of alternation between third valve and first and second valves; I wonder whether it is for facility or to produce slightly different pitches. There are no moveable slides on the trubas, and from the recordings

that I have, tuning does not seem to be a highly prized musical aesthetic. That said, Nenad is strict about making sure that I play exactly all the right notes. Feeling under pressure, I tell Nenad that I will work on it tomorrow. Nenad is relentless however and keeps asking me to play it. He teaches me the whole song so I know it. I ask what he is playing at Guča. He tells me, "Stefan's Čoček". It is common for Serbian musicians to name musical pieces after themselves. Stefan pulled up last year's performance on YouTube. Stefan is the lead trumpet, he starts with a slow soulful cadenza. He sounds good, really good: such a beautiful sound, technique and articulation. I am in awe. I notice that in the band, there are only three trumpets: Nenad, Stefan, and Stephen. I mistakenly thought that the bands had four trumpets. I now started to realize that me playing with the band at Guča may not be a reality. I asked Martin if he can ask Nenad if I can play with them at Guča. Nenad shook his head, "Ne, ne." They have a list of players already drawn up and I am bitterly disappointed. I struggle to hide my disappointment. Why did he get my hopes up the night before? Maybe he was trying to flatter me. Perhaps he did not expect me to show up tonight. I felt naïve and stupid in believing that one of the best Romani brass bands in Serbia would want me to play with them. I asked Martin to ask if I could play with them outside of Guča. "Ne, the band is complete." Now I feel really small – he doesn't think that I'm any good. Too slow in learning tunes.

MK: "Can I come to the rehearsals and play?"

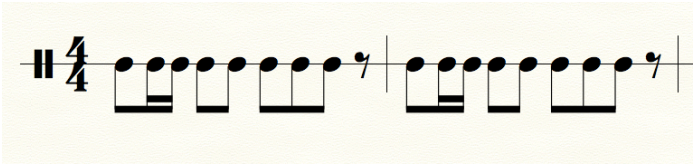
Nenad: "Da –tomorrow night. Come, listen, and play."

My spirit was lifted a little and I felt more encouraged. This is their livelihood, I told myself, their only means of income. If I played with them at weddings then it is less money for the regular players. I was probably expecting too much. I was grateful to be able to join in the rehearsals but I hoped not to hold them back. From my experience in British brass bands,

contesting is serious business. In Britain we rehearsed every night for two weeks before the contest and our sponsorship relied on our success. Miša also told me that I should not bring the children to Guča – it is not safe. I like Miša. He is like an elder, a grandfather figure, looking out for people.

As Guča drew closer, rehearsals intensified, but Nenad and Stefan still took time out to teach me. Stefan played "Ederlezi", one of the most famous folk songs in Serbia. I asked Stefan to teach it to me. He taught me some of it, but then Nenad took over. Miša helped by singing and showing me the fingering. I struggled to pick up the tune. Nenad shook his head and appeared frustrated. I explained that I have a poor memory and it takes me many times to get it. It is difficult to learn it phrase by phrase and I sometimes lost track of the form. "Professor! Get notes!" shouted Nenad. I go to my bag and give him my manuscript book. He writes out the tune for "Ederlezi". It is all in quarter notes, a sharp instead of a flat and a repeat sign the wrong way around. It took him a long time to write it and I appreciate his effort. He asked me to play it. By this time I have learnt the tune by ear. I played it like he taught me, not how it is written, and I did not make any pitch mistakes. "See – you get it much easier that way," said Nenad. I explained that that was the only way I learned until recently. As they have only learnt by ear, it is probably more natural to them. Nenad played two different versions of "Ederlezi". The first version is free and soulful and the second version very rhythmic. Nenad and Miša got frustrated with me again because I played it in the free way rather than the more rhythmic way. They played and accompanied me with one of the many typical čoček rhythms (see *Figure 1*) and Nenad harmonized under me. They shouted at me when I made mistakes. As I tried to work out some of the notes they shouted at me again – ne, ne! By the end I have it. Bravo! Super! Miša says to Martin that I have a nice tone.

Figure 1. Čoček rhythm used in "Ederlezi"



When I asked Nenad about how they work out the arrangements and learn the music for the competition he told me that they used to solicit the help of an accordion player from Vranje, Radko Sistanović, who is non-Romani accordion professor and a guitar professor:

> When we get a song, when we draw a song, we consult two professors and they give me some suggestions. So we don't move much from the melody, but we make their own arrangements with the help of these professors. One is the guitar professor and the other one is the accordion professor, Mr. Sistanović. They write the notes for all the instruments, and then they play by the notes. This was ten years ago.[71]

Nenad, as leader of the band, described his role in directing the band and rehearsing the arrangement:

> First I learn the piece, to play it very, very well. When I learn it, I start playing it with the others and teach them, with Radko. And then the other members start to join and I tell them what to play. Radko plays on the piano and writes everything for them, for the trumpet, for the bass players, for everybody; he writes the notes. Then they gather together, and Radko gives them instructions. First voice play that, second voice play that. The other members of the band are not musically educated, just me, I have this knowledge. Although they are not educated, when Radko tells them what to do, they immediately know what to do. We practice for two months, we pay him [Radko] for this service, we pay him very well, but he prepares us very well so we get prepared for two months and we go to the competition.[72]

Ismail spoke about how important it was to be able to play by ear and learn a tune quickly.[73] This method of learning also explains some of the hybridity of Romani music:

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[71] Interview between Matthew Kay and Nenad Mladenović, August 24th 2015.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Video of Nenad playing "Kalishnikov" so I could keep it and practice for reference. July 28, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iOquT5cuuc&feature=youtu.be.

> I think the most important thing about Romani musicians and Romani music is capturing fast - anything. Getting the best flavors of different kinds of music. So the ear is very strong naturally, I hear something, I do it. I can do it very well. I get attached to it. I just pick up the most important thing, and I leave everything else. So basically, it stays in the ear that way, and you're doing it repetitively and it becomes part of you and becomes part of the music. Romani music constantly changes, because of the influences especially these twenty years, if you go back twenty years with the development of the internet and the electronic world, it's very easy for everyone to get in touch with different kinds of music and that's why sometimes you get hip-hop beats. So it's all mixed, their [Romani] music is getting influenced very quickly.[74]

Ismail's reference to technology ties in with Stefan's comments on technology and how it has enabled Stefan to slow the music down, and also expand his repertoire and push the musical limits of his style. Stefan added that he learns mostly from listening to other musicians:

> I listen to many trumpet players but most of all I listen to my father. I hear what they do, I try it and I copy it. I manage to sound like them. [Which other trumpet players?] Marko Marković. Ekrem Mamutović. My cousin, he has a separate band. I played with him as well. He is older than me, and gave me some suggestions. The people who had the most influence on me were my grandfather, my father, and maybe my cousin, Ekrem. So they are probably who I learned from the most. [75]

Stefan went on to explain how he built on what he had learnt by expanding on exercises and repertoire:

> My father taught me some exercises and I played them and improvised on them and tried to make them harder and more difficult in order to practice better. I don't always play brass. I listen to some, for example, Bulgarian bands who play some čočeks, but not brass bands, they play them on different instruments [such as] clarinet and saxophone. I listen to them and make my own version. The other members of the band, they have never done anything like that, to improvise and to make these versions from combinations of clarinet and saxophone [solos].[76]

During the rehearsals leading up to Guča I took notes and recorded some of the rehearsals. The first rehearsal I witnessed was a sectional for the baritones.[77] The rehearsals were held in Nenad's backyard, and even though the surroundings are informal, the work ethic is

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[74] Interview between Matthew Kay and Ismail Lumanovski, January 13th 2017.
[75] Interview between Matthew Kay and Stefan Mladenović, August 13th 2015.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Video of baritone sectional, July 30th 2015.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMeBJIdMvKk&feature=youtu.be

serious and industrious. On a stool is a man, perhaps Radko Sistanović, sitting with a couple of pieces of notepaper. It is interesting to watch the man and Nenad work together. The man's input is minimal compared to Nenad, the truba player with no shirt, who is clearly in charge. There is one player in particular who is having difficulty learning the part. Nenad works patiently with the man, singing the other instruments' parts and then singing the man's parts while showing the "fingering" with his own hands, or playing the part. Singing and showing the "fingering" was the common way in which both Nenad and Stefan taught me tunes as well. Watching Nenad direct the rehearsal supports his statement that he learns the piece well himself first and then plays it to the others to teach them. This also indicates that the role of the first trumpet goes beyond playing the lead, he also has to learn the other parts in the band, teach it to them and direct the ensemble.[78]

Later on that evening Nenad rehearsed the whole band. It is evident from this part of the rehearsal that the part Nenad was singing to the baritones was not his part, but Stefan's, who now plays the solos as Nenad makes way for his son. During this section of the rehearsal, Nenad physically cues the musicians using his truba and large gestures.[79] Towards the end of the rehearsal, the band rehearses their second, faster piece. In the video of this section, the virtuosity of the band, especially Stefan who plays an improvised solo can be heard. Nenad shouts and cues the band in towards the end of Stefan's solo.

Stefan also arranges music for the band, but works it out himself on either the piano or the trumpet. He explains that he only pays attention to trumpets and the accompaniment in the baritones:

[78] As musicians in Romani brass bands are exclusively male I will use the male pronoun.
[79] Video of the full band rehearsal, July 30th 2015. https://youtu.be/eD7Qi4EteNM

> I first prepare the trumpet players for the melody, and then the harmony, and the bass players are so experienced that I don't need to prepare them so much, they just jump in and everything is already combined and done. Rhythm and bass players, they just jump in and they know what they have to do. I don't need to tell them much what to do.[80]

When I asked Nenad and Stefan what they felt was the most important attribute to their playing, they said that everything was important, but a common thread that stood out was the concept of soul:

> For us, everything is important: sound, technique, and rhythm. We have to adapt our playing to the event. If we are playing inside, we have to play slowly and quietly. If it is outside then it is louder. The first trumpet role is to make everyone to feel very nice and well, and that's why we pay so much attention to this sound. We play from our souls, and that's the most important part - from the soul. Bakija Bakić played like this. Other bands tend to play loud and to make the impression with their loudness. But no, we want to make the impression on the listener by playing from our soul. These Serbian players, not the Romani players, from Western Serbia, they are technically perfect but that's technique…They play very well, and even when they don't know it, they learn it. But soul, it's in the veins in our blood, and that's what can't be learned. The biggest maestros in the world can't manage that if they don't have it in themselves.[81]

Another southern Serbian trumpet player, Ekrem Sajdić told writer, Garth Cartwright, that it's not the musicians' technique that defines them: "'It's all about the sound of the trumpets…The others [non-Romani, I presume] simply don't have this sound. It's honest, sad, and deep. It's everything we have.'"[82] Ismail Lumanoviski also emphasized the importance of feelings and emotion in the music:

> I think the most important thing about Romani music is the feelings are more important than anything else. The emotion of the music, it's more important than anything else. So it's very fresh in a way. The feeling is always there.[83]

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[80] Interview between Matthew Kay and Stefan Mladenović, August 30th 2015.
[81] Interview between Matthew Kay and Nenad Mladenović, August 24th 2015.
[82] Garth Cartwright, *Princes Amongst Men: Journeys with Gypsy Musicians,* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2005), 50-51.
[83] Interview between Matthew Kay and Ismail Lumanovski, January 13th 2017.

Guča

I desperately wanted to go to Guča, but I could not to leave Alyn and the children. Nenad and the others had offered that I ride with them. I felt it would have been an excellent opportunity to build relationships and get a first hand account of the contest experience. I could not, however, in good conscience leave my family and there was no way we could have all fit in their minibus. I went with Mirko to the bus station to book bus tickets to take us to Guča and looked on the Internet for accommodation. Guča is just a small village, so accommodation is very expensive. We managed to find a small room in Gornja Trepča, a small spa town about thirty minutes drive from Guča.

The bus ride to Čačak was horrible. It takes around three and half hours by car and around six hours on the bus although with four small children it felt more like twelve hours. Čačak is the main town in the Dragačevo district of western Serbia, about six miles from Guča. The area is mountainous and Čačak was one of the towns that suffered civilian casualties from the NATO bombings.[84]

As we walked out of the bus station, there were some people stood outside. They started to admire our children and make a fuss of them. They said that we were very rich. I was not sure whether this meant that we needed a lot of money to have so many children, or it was their way of saying that we were blessed by our children. One of the men introduced himself as Vlad, a tour guide. He asked were we going and I told him Guča but we were staying in Gornja Trepča. He arranged for an available taxi driver to take us to our room and then onto Guča. Vlad gave me his number and told us to contact him if we needed anything.

[84] William M. Arkin, "Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign," *Human Rights Watch,* 12, no. 1 (D) (February 2000). https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2000/nato/index.htm (accessed January 21, 2019)

The taxi driver drove very fast through the winding mountain roads, overtaking on blind bends. I tried to reassure myself that as he knew the roads well, we would be safe. When we arrived at our room, we learned that it had been checked out to someone else. There was a lot of discussion between the owners of the rooms, and then they finally showed us this tiny room with two beds. They offered us a discount and there was nothing else, so we took the room. Alyn decided to stay with the children and I went off to Guča. We decided that we would only take the children in the daytime as it would be safer, and I would go on my own at night.

I was so excited to go to Guča that evening as Boban and Marko Marković were playing that evening. Boban and Marko Marković are, like many Romani musicians, father and son. They come from Vladičin Han, another town about nine miles from Vranje. They are probably the best-known Serbian/Romani band outside of Serbia and were one of the bands featured in the Kusturica movie, *Underground.*

Guča is the most important trumpet festival of the year for Serbian trumpet players, and is an internationally famous tourist attraction. Miles Davis visited Guča once and allegedly stated, "I didn't know you could play trumpet that way."[85] Western Serbia has a high density of non-Romani Serbian brass bands, including the Dejan Petrović Big Band that was popular in Serbia at the time I was there. Bands come from all over the country come and compete, but before they do, they need to qualify in a smaller local competition. For Nenad's band, it was the Surdulica Trumpet Festival nearby to Vranje. This is a similar format that they have for the brass band competitions in Britain. Every year, they have a regional "qualifier" competition. The first two placed bands qualify to play in the finals that are held in the Royal Albert Hall. As most of the

[85] Guča Trumpet Festival Official Website. http://www.guca.rs/history/ (accessed March 22nd, 2017)

best brass bands come from the North of England, they are also the most difficult to win, therefore, winning the regional qualifier is no small feat if you are from the North of England.[86]

Like England, the organizers of the Serbian band competitions have strict rules regarding the instrumentation: three trubas, four baritones, one tuba, and two drummers. One of the drummers plays a tapan, which is similar to a bass drum but played with a solid club in one hand and a switch in the other, and the other drummer plays the snare drum). Recently the organizers of Guča imposed more rules to preserve the folk tradition of Serbia:

> These people from Guča, the organisers, the committee, they're very strict. They don't allow foreign music and influence at the festival. Because many bands play foreign songs, they decided three years ago to compose a list of songs that they draw. The song they get is the song they prepare [for the competition].[87]

The festival attracts visitors from all over the world. When the festival began in 1961, there were four bands. According to one of the festival's founders, Nikola Stojić, at the first festival judges were in tears as they were witnessing a "renaissance of Serbian culture", something different from government-led cultural programs.[88] He never expected it would grow to such proportions. Nowadays, approximately 150,000 tourists flock to Guča every year,

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[86] In Britain, brass band competitions can be a contentious issue. When I was studying for my undergraduate degree at The University of Huddersfield, several musicians, especially those from who were from an orchestral background, held the view that band competitions were some kind of barbaric gladiator sport and as such, musicians should not compete against each other but just play concerts. This view also reflects some of the prejudices that musicians had against brass bands, being born out of a working class culture. Although orchestra competitions do not exist, there are many instrumental solo competitions in the classical music world. Competitions have proved effective in both the brass band and music world in general, pushing musicians to the limits of their capabilities, jump starting musicians' careers, and commissioning new works.
[87] Interview between Matthew Kay and Nenad Mladenović, August 24th 2015.
[88] Alex Crevar, "Chasing Boban: Guča's Trumpet Festival," Lonely Planet, https://www.lonelyplanet.com/europe/travel-tips-and-articles/chasing-boban-gucas-trumpet-festival/40625c8c-8a11-5710-a052-1479d2754036 (accessed January 26, 2019).

although some reports estimate 400,000[89] and according to the Serbian brewery, MB, beer sales of 700,000 pints were reported in 2006.[90]

In Serbia, the Guča Festival is important in preserving the folk tradition and bringing tourism to the country. Politicians have also recognized the value of using the Guča Trumpet Festival, along with the EXIT popular music festival, for rebranding Serbian national identity as hospitable and fun-loving, and moving away from the negative images of the ethnic cleansing during the wars, the subsequent Hague trials, and violence towards foreigners at sports events.[91] In 2006, the Serbian prime minister, Vojislav Koštunica delivered an address at the closing ceremony of the festival, promoting the festival as a form of national identity:

> Guča represents in a best way what Serbia is today, its openness, belief in oneself, hospitality, party and music. [The] trumpet festival is a confirmation of our courage and joy, both in good and bad times…It speaks about who we are, what we are, our urges. We express our joy and sadness with trumpet, we are born with sounds of trumpet and also buried with sounds of trumpet. Guča is a Serbian brand, it's a value that can represent Serbia in the world. Those that cannot understand and love Guča, cannot understand Serbia.[92]

One blogger paints a more realistic picture of the festival: "Guca is chaos. It's loud. It's smelly. It's drunk and disorderly. It's primitive and decadent. It's full of nationalistic Serbs, dirty foreign backpacking tourists, gangsters, mayors, farmers all sticking notes on the foreheads of helpless gypsies there to entertain the masses. It's fucking awesome."[93] Attempts at creating a

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[89] Ljubisa Bojic, "Serbia: Guča and Exit Music Festivals," Global Voices, https://globalvoices.org/2006/09/14/serbia-guca-and-exit-music-festivals/# (accessed January 26, 2019)
[90] Ibid.
[91] Branislava (Brana) Mijatović, "The Musical (Re)branding of Serbia," in *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe,* ed. Nadia Kaneva (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 213-236.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Chachakhan, https://www.reddit.com/r/serbia/comments/1eeqs9/visiting_guca_festival/ (accessed February 6, 2019). The notes on the foreheads of gypsy musicians is part of the tipping protocol in Serbia and commonly accepted. This tipping practice will happen at Romani weddings as well as Serbian weddings, and

national identity from a festival that consist of drunkenness[94] and the ultra-nationalism that instigated the wars of the 1990s has attracted its fair share of criticism. In response to the prime minister's speech, Belgrade journalist, Teofil Pančić described Guča as "a parade of drunkenness and slush presented as an original Serbian identity."[95] Another blogger who identifies himself as Viktor, comments that:

> You don't have to love trumpet and Guča to understand Serbia. You don't even have to know what Guča is to love Serbia. Because Guča is far from [the] only thing that can represent Serbia, and that is exactly what the Prime Minister is clumsily trying to make out of it. Speeches like this one are dangerous because they give ultra-nationalists more rights to claim this festival as their own and in a way 'kidnap' it from other people. That's why it is possible to see young men proudly wearing t-shirts with war criminals in the festival crowds, thank God only a handful of them, but still one handful too many. [96]

The idea of using Serbian brass bands to reflect Serbian national identity was not new, and manifested itself in different ways throughout Serbia's history since its liberation from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Jelena Gligorijević discusses how the Serbian brass band is an invented tradition, emanating from the first brass band that was founded under Prince Milos Obrenović's rule in 1831. As the brass bands multiplied and spread through the Serbian villages, absorbing their local musical traditions, they became both a symbol of Serbian military prowess and local folk traditions.[97]

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is in itself not meant to degrade the musicians. Certainly though, the practice can be abused to degrade Romani musicians in a power play and I do not personally approve of such attitudes and practices.

[94] I had several conversations with Serbians who had negative feelings towards Guča because of the excessive drunkenness. The following video provides a glimpse of some of the debaucherous behaviors at Guča: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFttuikR2XQ (accessed January 26, 2019)

[95] Branislava (Brana) Mijatović, "The Musical (Re)branding of Serbia," in *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe,* ed. Nadia Kaneva (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 213 - 236.

[96] Viktor, "Guča - Not The Only Serbian Brand," Serbia Blog, entry posted September 5 2006, https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=gu%C4%8Da+not+the+only+serbian+brand&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8 (accessed February 11, 2019)

[97] Jelena Gligorijević, "World Music Festivals and Tourism: a Case Study of Serbia's Guča Trumpet Festival," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 2 (2014): 140-141.

The founding of the festival in 1961 was intended to be an antidote for the more commercially produced popular music and a way of preserving folk tradition and history. Due to the brass bands' historical connection with Prince Milos Obrenović and the Chetnik movement, the socialist ruling party viewed it with suspicion. During the 1970s and 1980s, the festival was embraced by the socialist regime and used to further Tito's vision of "brotherhood and unity" by bringing together the various ethnic musical traditions to one festival. The lyrics of the festival's official anthem, *From Ovčar and Kablar* were changed from celebrating the Serbian Royal and nationalist military leaders to lyrics that reflected the triumph of Tito's military leadership of the partisans in the Second World War. Following the break-up of Yugoslavia and the wars in the 1990s, the trumpet festival received government funding and the words of *From Ovčar and Kablar* were returned to their original lyrics, rejecting the socialist past and feelings of "brotherhood and unity", and returning to a national Serbian identity.

The taxi driver pulled into the parking lot outside the festival. I paid the driver and took in the spectacle as I walk past the bars, food stands selling charcoal grilled meat, and stalls selling pictures of war criminals: Ratko Mladić - the "Butcher of Bosnia"[98]; Radovan Karadzić; Slobadan Milosević, Vojislav Seselj, and Chetnik Second World War leader, Draža Mihailović, who was executed after the Second World War for high treason (collaborating with the Nazis) and war crimes. Bright yellow signs advertising Jelen beer dominate the landscape as men carrying the same beer walk around wearing the national military style hat, the šajkača that also identifies with the nationalist Chetnik movement.[99]

[98] Joel Gunter, "The Butcher of Bosnia," BBC News, November 22, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13559597 (accessed January 28, 2019).
[99] Jelena Gligorijević, "World Music Festivals and Tourism: a Case Study of Serbia's Guča Trumpet Festival," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 2 (2014): 140-141.

I bought myself a beer and walked into the football stadium were Boban and Marko Marković would be playing soon. Music for Serbian brass bands is almost like a family business, and as for Romani musicians, it can be their main source of income so they begin young. When I interviewed the Macedonian-Romani clarinet player, Ismail Lumanovski, he told me that he started playing the accordion when he was five years old and the clarinet when he was seven years old, and he was surrounded by musicians in his family:

> Because, folk [music] was very natural, it was home, everything came from there. I was surrounded with the best musicians that play. Because my father was a singer, a pretty well-known singer, he would play with the best folk musicians around. I would be inspired by them; I would be exposed to it all the time.[100]

Unfortunately, music will often come into conflict with education. A criticism often directed at Roma is that they do not finish school, especially musicians.[101] Employment prospects for Roma are not promising with substantially higher unemployment rates that non-Roma, employment discrimination against Roma, and precarious employment positions.[102] Many musicians start playing music at weddings at around fifteen-years-old and would bring in substantial earnings through tips. Ismail Lumanovski explains the frustrations that he and his clarinet teacher had with his students in Macedonia: "They [the students] practice a little bit and they can do it. They grow up and they come to fourteen, fifteen. They really start playing weddings, they see a little bit of money, and that's it - they're not there anymore."[103] Ismail did finish school and went on to study at The Julliard School and play with orchestras and famous conductors such as Pierre Boulez.

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[100] Interview between Matthew Kay and Ismail Lumanovski, January 13th 2017.
[101] Both Mirko and my translator, Dejan, also commented on how the Roma rarely complete their education.
[102] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Roma Survey - Data in Focus Poverty and Employment: The Situation of Roma in 11EU Member States* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014), 11.
[103] Interview between Matthew Kay and Ismail Lumanovski, January 13th 2017.

Ismail's story is not so common, however. Nenad explained that his father did not want his sons to become trumpet players, as he knew it was a hard job; he wanted them to finish school and get a good education. Nenad went to a music school in Štip, Macedonia, and learned music from a classical trumpet player. While he was at school, Nenad formed a band and entered a competition in Vranje and won. He then went on to compete at the Guča Trumpet Festival and won there too. Nenad continued to play weddings at the weekend and attend the school in Štip during the week. This lifestyle did not agree with the principal of the school, however:

> So I went back to school. The teacher of the school who was also the principal of the school told me, "You can't play at weddings and at the same time go to school, because after the weekend your mouth is swollen. You cannot do that. Either you will go to school or you will play in the bands." But I was very good and every weekend the people from Vranje who went to Štip took me [away] to play. Another Monday I was in Štip with a swollen mouth, and again, the director was complaining at me all the time. One day I was so fed up and I called my father [Ekrem Mamutović later Mladenović] and said, "I am coming back to Vranje." I entered the orchestra at that age.[104]

All three of Ekrem's sons ended up playing in the famous Duvački Orkestar Bakije Bakića. The eldest son, Ekrem, formed his own band after a rift within the band but has gone on to enjoy considerable personal success. At the time of writing, the other two sons, Nenad and Miša play under the original Bakija Bakića name, along with Stefan, Nenad's son, and Fabijan on tapan, who is married to Miša's daughter, Jovanka. Nenad did not follow his father's impositions regarding Stefan playing the trumpet, and both his grandfather and father encouraged Stefan to play the trumpet.

The conflict between music and getting an education is similar with Boban and Marko Marković. In his book, *Princes Amongst Men,* Garth Cartwright writes how in an interview with

[104] Interview between Matthew Kay and Nenad Mladenović, August 24th 2015.

Boban Marković he explains that he was bad in school so he chose to play the trumpet.[105] His mother's grandfather was a great musician who played for royalty but his father was only average. He explained that his father taught him the trumpet by singing the notes to him. He was a tough teacher because Boban was the seventh child and oldest son. By fifteen, Boban was playing professionally. Like his father, Marko had little interest in school and after bad reports from teachers at thirteen years old, Marko began his apprenticeship with his father.[106]

The Boban and Marko Marković entered the stage at Guča. The band was dressed in white, Marko and Boban both wore sunglasses to distinguish themselves from the rest of the band. Marko wore a straw panama hat and Boban had a patterned shirt to show that he still remains the leader of the band. The band played a mixture of traditional and modern tunes and everything was rhythmically tight with speed and energy. The traditional tapan was replaced with a drum set and Marko played the valve trumpet rather than the traditional rotary flügel horn. Both Marko's and his father's presence were more like that of rock stars than trumpet players. Marko, as the creative force behind the band now overshadowed his father with his scintillating high register, formidable technique and stage presence as he strutted around the stage singing.[107] Boban told Cartwright in the interview how he had to buy Marko a mute as he was playing for ten hours a day and how he expected other members of the band to match his practice schedule without regard for their family commitments.[108]

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105 Garth Cartwright, *Princes Amongst Men: Journeys with Gypsy Musicians,* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2005), 74-79.
106 Ibid.
107 Koncert Bobana i Marka Markovica Guca 2015 1. deo, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8RE6xiprvY (accessed February 4th, 2019)
108 Garth Cartwright, *Princes Amongst Men: Journeys with Gypsy Musicians,* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2005), 74-79.

Boban Marković won their last prize at Guča in 2001. Since playing the soundtrack to *Underground* in 1995 and signing with world music label, Piranha Records, winning at Guča has become unnecessary. Boban feels the competition is too restrictive with their strict rules on instrumentation and performing folk music. He told Cartwright that he prefered to entertain: "I want to make popular music, not music for ethnomusicologists".[109] Marko has never entered the Guča competition, nor, I expect, will he ever need to.[110] From examining the listings of winners of the different categories of the Guča competition, it appears that the prizes are shared among the various bands from different areas and between Serbian and Romani bands. Since the competition began in 1961, the only player to win the first trumpet prize two years in a row is Bakija Bakić (Nenad's great uncle), in 1969 and 1970.[111] The year after I went to Serbia, I contacted Mirko to find out how Nenad and Stefan fared in the competition. Mirko commented that they came in second place and told me that they had to share out the prizes. For a band like Boban and Marko Marković, with an international reputation for being the best brass band, they cannot afford to lose at Guča; which would be highly likely given the contest's propensity for sharing prizes among the bands. Besides, Boban and Marko Marković are more than well received when they play their concerts in the evening at the festival.

After the concert by Boban and Marko Marković, I took a taxi back to our room. The next morning we headed to the local hotel for breakfast. The waiter was excited to meet someone who is English and insisted on showing his hospitality by serving me a shot of rakija, the local plum brandy. I followed the rakija with a coffee chaser and ordered a traditional Serbian breakfast of bread, cheese, olives and burek, a form of pastry. My family took a taxi back to

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109 Ibid., 74.
110 Ibid.
111 Guča Festival Website, https://gucafestival.rs/eng/festival-winners/ (accessed February 6, 2019)

Guča and walked around listening to the various bands that were playing in bars for tips. Our children drew a lot of attention from the people and gave our children potato chips and candy, who in turn gave it to the children who were begging for food or money.

As it got to late afternoon, we decided to head back to the room and I would travel back to Guča to watch the competition. Alyn felt uneasy about me going back to Guča with the taxi driver based on the recklessness of his driving; passing cars on blind bends and driving as fast as possible. He obviously wanted to get as many fares as possible while the trumpet festival was going on. I went back to Guča in the taxi, and the driver picked up some more passengers on the way although my fare was not any less. I did not have the will or language skills to debate the issue, plus, by the time I arrived back in Guča and having picked up all the passengers and stopping for gas, the competition had already begun and I was worried about missing my friends, the Bakija Bakić band, play.

The taxi pulled up at Guča. I could hear the competition in the distance at the football stadium. Instead of taking the usual route through all the food stands, I decided to take a short cut that I had heard about along the river. As I walked along the path, it disappeared but I noticed another path about six feet below me. I jumped down and landed with my right foot on a loose rock. The fall sent me tumbling to the ground and I felt pain in my right leg. I looked at my leg and immediately realized that was the end of my night. My shinbone was twisted at right angles to the right of my thigh. I forced the lower half of my leg back into place with my hands and tried to get up to walk. The lower half of my right leg would not move and I was stranded, in agony.

A few minutes later I heard some people passing by and I shouted for help. It was a group of men and women in their twenties. Fortunately, they spoke English. I explained what had

happened and two men lifted me up on their shoulders and carried me to the main street, in front of a bar, and called an ambulance for me. I asked if someone could get some ice from the bar but the bar said that they did not have any. I waited and waited wondering if the ambulance was actually going to come. Meanwhile, I started to feel cold and shiver, while I watched the police pass me by and ignore me. At this point, I could do nothing else but pray that I would somehow be rescued from this situation. The ambulance finally arrived and they stretchered me inside. The first step to receiving medical care was to hand over my passport. They transported me to the hospital in Čačak. On the way to the hospital I started to think how I was going to contact Alyn as I knew she would be extremely worried if I did not return to the room. I called Vlad, the tour guide who we met at the bus station in Čačak. He told me that he would meet me at the hospital.

The ambulance arrived at the hospital and they wheeled me out to a corridor. The corridor was dark and eerie. I noticed electric wires spewing out of the wall while the single white light flickered. Two stray dogs wandered past me and the nurse came back to shoo them outside. Soon after, Vlad arrived. It was good to see a friendly face and I was thankful to see him. The nurse took me to have an x-ray and then wheeled me to a room where I was to wait for the doctor.

The doctor finally came and showed me the x-ray. “You have ruptured your patellar tendon. It will need surgery, but we cannot do it here. Go back to the U.S. and have it done there.” I immediately felt relief that they would not be able to do surgery there but I was distraught that it could mean an end to my research. I had not even had the opportunity to interview Nenad and Stefan yet. I asked if there was anywhere in Serbia that would be able to do surgery. The doctor told me that there maybe somewhere in Belgrade. Despite the challenges of having surgery in a foreign country, I felt it was worth the risk to be able to finish my research.

The nurse set my whole leg in plaster and ordered me to get up and walk. I got up and hopped out of the hospital and Vlad gave me a ride back to my room. I offered to pay him for the ride but he refused, but said that he would be able to arrange for someone to take me Belgrade.

When I arrived back at the room, Vlad helped me down the steps. Alyn came out to see what the commotion was. She was nervously waiting and praying that I would be all right, initially sensing that the plan that night was not good. She immediately broke down in tears when she saw me. We went to bed and when I awoke, the next morning, I was hoping everything would be fine and it was all a bad dream. We decided that we would go to the local hotel and use their Internet to call the travel insurance company to arrange transportation to Belgrade and hopefully medical care there. I went to pay the owner of the room and she demanded that I give her our passports so she can register us with the local police. I told her there was no need as we were leaving but she told me that we had to give her the passports. I told her that the passports were our property and I would not be giving them to her, as we needed to leave and work out how to get to Belgrade. An argument ensued and she eventually resolved to take our payment for the room without us providing passports. For a Westerner, who has lived in a relatively free society, it is difficult to adapt to the authoritarian bureaucracy of a former-communist country where every movement is tracked by the authorities. Perhaps I could have been more sensitive to the room owner's needs, but I maintain that letting my passport out of my sight in a foreign country would have been unwise.

At the hotel, we were quite the spectacle with my leg propped up on a chair and my children all around. Several of the locals would come and visit us and play with our children. One helpful local said that he could take me to a man in the next village who would be able twist my leg into shape and I would be fine again. I decided to decline his kind offer and take my

chances in Belgrade. The travel insurance company was extremely slow in arranging transportation and I had to call back repeatedly before they finally confirmed that someone was on their way. The insurance company would not allow me to use Vlad's friend but made me use one of their drivers. The difficulty they had, was finding a vehicle that would be able to accommodate my family of six legally. A car arrived at around 7:30 pm and took us on the two and a half hour journey to Belgrade. The car was a regular car so I had to sit across the back seat with my leg across it and my children sat either on my good knee or in front of my right leg. While we were waiting for the transportation, Nikola, our landlord's son, made a recommendation of a hospital that would provide good medical care so we booked a hotel close to that hospital.

On the journey to Belgrade, Vlad called and asked how much I am going to pay him. He wanted to meet me. When he refused my offer of money the night before, I thought that he was being kind and genuinely wanted to help a foreigner in his country. In his mind he had made a covert contract that I was unaware of, probably with the intent of making more money, perhaps from the insurance company. I told him that I could not meet him as I was on the way to Belgrade but if he gave me his address, I would send him some money. Even though I never agreed to pay Vlad anything, I did not want him to feel out of pocket from helping me. I would send him the taxi fare and a little more, at least for his trouble and he could lose his blessing for helping a foreigner in need.

Money, and the perception of wealth was one of the most difficult issues to deal with during my research in Serbia. Thanks to Hollywood, usually the main source of American culture to those who live outside the Unites States, there is already a perception that anyone from the United States must be rich. Also, with having four children, it seemed that people took that as

a sign of wealth. During the several evenings that I spent with Nenad and Miša, they would pry into how much money I made, how much I charged for lessons, how much it cost to travel to Serbia. I had to explain how I was able to get a grant to travel to Serbia, and how I worked night shifts and supplemented my job with private teaching. I always felt uncomfortable with the conversations, as I was aware that they were helping me for nothing, but if I paid them for their help I could be in violation of IRB regulations. Although, it could be seen as paying for lessons and services rendered, I was always concerned about the issue of money upsetting the balance of neutrality in the research. One night, Nenad asked if he could follow us back to our lodging to see where we were staying. Again, I felt uncomfortable with this idea as our lodging, was nice compared to a lot of the houses in the Romani neighborhood, even though by Western standards it was reasonably priced especially as we had booked it for a long period. Nenad followed us back and when we arrived I bid Nenad good night and told him that he and his family should come for dinner sometime. He told me he would like that.

The journey to Belgrade seemed long and arduous with us all crammed in to the taxi and the children sat on my knee. The next day we went to the Banjica Hospital in Belgrade, which Nikola had recommended. There were lots of people waiting outside, laid out in stretchers. I entered the hospital and it seemed chaotic and disorganized. The doctor saw me and took me into a consultation room. He did not look impressed with the cast on my leg and told me that he was going to re-cast it. The doctor told me to return to America and have it examined there. I asked the doctor if the ligament would heal and he told me no, and surgery is not an option at this hospital. I told the doctor that I had insurance; he responded, “Everything is free here, even though Great Britain hates us.” I told him that it’s not true and Britain does not hate Serbia. I added that I liked Serbia and it is the media who is to blame. The doctor gave me his telephone

number and told me to come back if it works out with my insurance. I left and decided to try a different hospital.

After calling the insurance company, I got referred to a private hospital close to the Red Star Belgrade football stadium. Having seen Red Star Belgrade play on television in the UEFA Championships I was excited to see the stadium from the taxi. We arrived and went inside the Bel-Medic hospital. The hospital was more akin to a large Victorian town house than a hospital. It was beautifully decorated and was comfortable and welcoming. In the consultation room I explained to the doctor how I fell at the Guča trumpet festival. The doctor told me that Guča has changed a lot and was much better twenty years ago. I explained to the doctor that the insurance company required that I have an MRI, the doctor disagreed, "Sometimes fingers are better", and proceeded to prod and squeeze my swollen and painful knee. At that time, I think I would have preferred a MRI. He told me that my ligament is completely severed and that I should go home and have surgery. This was not an option; I needed to complete my research. I asked if I could have the surgery at this hospital; at least he did not make any anti-British comments, which gave me some confidence. The doctor agreed and one of his colleagues entered and they begin drawing imaginary lines up and down my leg. Meanwhile, I was on the phone to the insurance company trying to have them honor the insurance policy and provide the hospital with the necessary paperwork.

That evening, I awoke from surgery in agonizing pain. They give me painkillers and I went back to sleep. I spent the next couple of days trying to entertain my family in my hospital room, and trying to get the insurance company to make arrangements to extend my stay and rebook flights. I felt that I had lost valuable research time with having surgery and I was eager to

continue with my research and make the most of my time. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, flying after surgery increased the risk of deep veined thrombosis.

During my hospital stay, I had the unexpected but pleasant surprise of a visit by Ana, Nikola, and her other son, Marko, our hosts in Vranje. I asked them their opinions on Serbian music and in particular Romani music. Nikola told me how most people have a brass band at weddings and he could not imagine Vranje without Roma. He explained to me how the Roma take various tunes and make them their own. Romani brass bands have continued to both preserve tradition while remaining sufficiently cosmopolitan to cater to an ever-changing, more global audience.

The lack of a single common style of Romani music and the degree of cosmopolitanism versus localism creates a continual discourse among musicians and scholars alike. Instead, musicians typically draw from the music from the country in which they live.[112] Nenad criticizes Boban Marković for his commercialism and how he uses so many different genres, and explains how important he believes it is that they should play Serbian music:

> We are Romani people, and we play Serbian songs as it's very important for us. Sometimes, for example, Boban Marković uses foreign styles and foreign music, but no, we stick to Serbian traditional music because we live here and that's what's natural to us and very important to us.

Nenad is not so much critical of using foreign tunes, as he does that himself, but of musicians incorporating foreign styles such as Latin, jazz, rock and rap.

Purist scholars of folk music such as Béla Bartók are critical of the Gypsies' treatment of folk music. Bartók, in his effort to promote Hungarian peasant music as a higher order of music than Gypsy music, claimed that the Gypsies play Hungarian and Western European light art

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[112] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21-23.

music with an "excess of *rubato* and ornaments."[113] Bartók argued that, "the so-called 'Gipsy music' is not Gipsy music at all, but Hungarian music, from miscellaneous sources, performed by Gipsies. One would be justified, at most, in speaking of Gipsy methods of performance - a subject, I repeat it, which I leave to those whom it may attract."[114] Despite the derogatory tone, Bartók is correct that Romani music is more a manner of how they perform and arrange music, rather than their compositions. During my time in Serbia, I saw Nenad's band perform a variety of western popular tunes such as, "O When The Saints Go Marchin' In", "El Condor Pasa", and "Billie Jean". The arrangements were recognizable, but musicians applied certain traits signature to the region such as čoček rhythms, ornamentations, and oriental[115] tonalities in the improvisations. Nenad described how the transnational nature of the Romani people, plus the necessity to make money from music and entertain audiences from different regions, required the need to adopt popular tunes from various countries and cultures:

> We play at all types of celebrations, weddings, birthdays, festivals, concerts, we even follow some singers. We play at funerals. We also play with Goran Bregović. He is our great friend. He is from Sarajevo and lives in Belgrade. Usnija Redžepova, she's a Romani singer from Skopje. She's married to a Serbian man in Belgrade, she's a Romani woman, and she's a famous singer. We play in Denmark, in Russia, in Sweden, in France, everywhere where our people live, Greece, we call them and we go there and play. Serbian weddings, Romani weddings.[116]

Romani music by its nature can always be described as a polygenre, a mix of geographic and ethnic styles and traditions. Serbian ethnomusicologist, Jelena Gligorijević, attributes the same term to all Serbian brass band music that performs traditional round dances such as the

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[113] Béla Bartók, *The Hungarian Folk Song,* ed. Benjamin Suchoff, trans. M.D. Calvocoressi. Annotated by Zoltán Kodály (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981), 99.
[114] Ibid., 99.
[115] The term "oriental" has become, in recent years, deeply problematic in American cultural discourses. I use this term in accord with both the British understanding of the term, as well as the way the concept is understood among my informants. My use of the term resonates with Edward Saïd's *Orientalism*, namely, that it refers to western ideas about the East. That said, I am aware of the particular debates regarding its use, and in using this term I in no way wish to dismiss such perspectives.
[116] Interview between Matthew Kay and Nenad Mladenović, August 24th 2015.

kolo, to Romani čočeks to popular tunes such as "Billie Jean" that have nothing in common with folk or "World Music", other than that they are performed by a traditional folk ensemble.

As Romani music has been described a polygenre, the same has been attributed to Serbian music. Music producers, Miloś Mitić and Bojan Djordjević describe Serbian world music as:

> An interplay between an oriental, Arabic heritage…European inflow, and, naturally, Serbia's native music…This *mélange* of different cultural inheritances and the large number of ethnic minorities living in Serbia are vital components of the country's rich musical tradition and the diversity of the "musical menu" in this genre.[117]

Dejan Petrović, a Serbian trumpet player from Duboko in western Serbia, not far from Guča, fuzes rock music and traditional folk music. His website describes him as "The Ambassador of the Serbian Trumpet":

> The name Dejan Petrović became a synonym for traditional Serbian music everywhere in the world, often combined with modern elements and adjusted for everybody's ear. Here it comes to fusion sound of traditional instruments, brass band and other instruments that are the opposite of it, like a compound of trumpets and sound distortion on electric guitar. As in each fusion, releases great energy, and it is not difficult to recognize that in this case.[118]

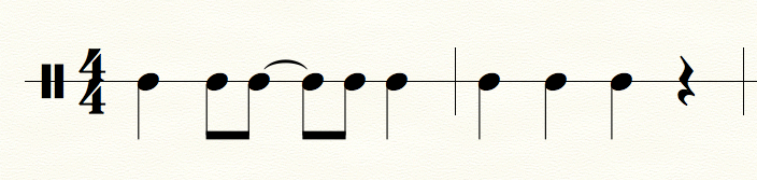
Probably Petrović's biggest hit is "Vrtlog", which is Serbian for whirlpool. The tune to "Vrtlog" is similar in style to many of the traditional round dances played by bands in western Serbia, but in this instance it combines a rock element with distorted guitar and heavy drums. Petrović's live performance at the Sava Center in 2011 shows how blues, rock and traditional elements of both music and dance are combined into one performance with a section that quotes Europe's 1986 rock anthem, "The Final Countdown". Following the introduction the band breaks into the main tune accompanied with dancers dancing the traditional circle dance. Their

[117] Bojan Djordjević and Miloś Mitić, "Language of Music," *CoRD* 21*,* (November 2005), 64-65, https://cordmagazine.com/cord/cord-magazine-no-21/ (accessed February 11, 2019)
[118] Dejan Petrović Official Website, http://www.dejanpetrovic.com/bio/ (accessed February 11, 2019).

costumes are all black, with the women wearing dresses and the men wearing the traditional sash-style belt often seen worn by the brass bands at Guča; a contemporary take on traditional styles.[119] "Vrtlog" was also one of the tunes that Nenad taught me. Nenad told me how he felt that Dejan Petrović was "technically perfect" but lacking in soul. Despite his feelings towards Petrović, Nenad still recognized the importance in playing, and teaching me Petrović's music as that is what the people liked.

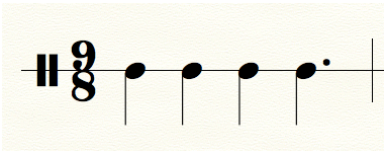
From my research, I would describe the main differences between Serbian brass music and Romani music as being in the nature of the meter, the harmony, and the improvisation. Serbian music is typically in a duple meter, with a polka style rhythm, the harmonies are typically based on Western diatonic scales with some exceptions. As Romani musicians perform for Serbians, many of the songs follow the same harmonies and meter as Serbian music, but the Romani characteristic čoček genre includes duple, compound and irregular meters.[120] Some of the rhythms have a distinctive style indicating the dance. Figure 2 for example is known as čifteteli.

Figure 2. Čifteteli



[119] Dejan Petrović Big Band, "Vrtlog," Live at the Sava Center, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9-7Rvx5Wcg (accessed February 11, 2019).
[120] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 29. Carol Silverman discusses in detail the nature of the musical language and provides a chart of some of the various čoček rhythms.

Figure 3. Čoček rhythm



The 2+2+2+3 rhythm in Figure 3 found its way into art music as far back as the seventeenth century. Ben Jonson's masque from 1621, *The Gypsies Metamorphosed,* includes a piece of music called the "Gypsies' Dance" using this rhythm. An uncommon rhythm for the time, it was clearly indicative of 'Gypsy music'.[121]

The Ottoman influence on Romani music is unmistakable, especially in regard to the rhythms and tonal system. Ottoman and Arabic classical music is based around a highly structured aural system of makams or maqams. The definition of a makam has proven to be problematic among scholars. Şentürk, Holzapfel, and Serra define a makam as a modal structure revolving around a başlangiç initial tone and an ending tone or karar.[122] Sami Abu Shumays goes one step further by describing it as "a network of pathways among ajnas [tetrachords], rather than simply a set of scales divided into tetrachords."[123] The website, "Maqamworld" adds that each makam has a mood and choosing the correct makam when improvising is important to the character of the music.[124] Harizanov defines the makam according to different groups such as

[121] Jim Samson, *Music in the Balkans,* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 88.
[122] Sertan Şentürk, André Holzapfel, and Xavier Serra, "Linking Scores and Audio Recordings in Makam Music of Turkey," *Journal of New Music Research,* 43, no. 1, 2014, 34-52.
[123] Sami Abu Shumays, "Maqam Analysis: A Primer," *Music Theory Spectrum,* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2013), 235-255.
[124] Maqamworld. http://www.maqamworld.com/maqamat.html (accessed March 25, 2017) The idea of a makam being associated with a particular mood also reminds of Indian ragas, and also the Ancient Greek modes where Plato in his book, *Republic,*recommended that potential rulers only listen to music in particular modes.

traditional singers or musicologists, but to Roma musicians he describes makams as "a modal system employing microtones and a performance style."

Before examining specific makamic use in Romani music, it is worth examining how the Turkish influence became so ingrained into the music. Although Ottoman classical music was initially played in the royal courts, elements of this music started to emerge in cafés, restaurants, dances, and other social occasions, especially in the Balkans.[125] The professional musicians were predominantly Roma, with their ability to play and switch between a number of styles and genres.[126] In Romania, Romani town-dwellers would sometimes join together with Romanian town dwellers to create ensembles. Referring to one such Romanian music ensemble, *musica lăutărească,* Jim Samson in his extensive study of Balkan music writes:

> M*usica lăutărească* synthesised Turkish makams and performance styles, European chordal harmony and appropriations of the melodic and rhythmic patterns of Romanian traditional music. It was the latter ingredient that provided the main distinguishing element, differentiating the lăutar ensembles from other urban popular music. Some of the Romanian repertory was trans-regional, and known by all, including ritual wedding music, epic songs, and traditional ballads. But there were also songs and dance melodies drawn from specific regions to be used as and when the occasion demanded, as well as versions of Greek and Turkish popular music. Somehow it all coalesced into a clearly defined style, associated with the solo dancing of the *horă ţigănească* [Gypsy hora], and with the popular women's song-dance known as *manea,* complete with *tsifteteli* [čifteteli] rhythm. By the late nineteenth century it had become customary to perform the repertory as suites of pieces according to context and demand.[127]

Ismail Lumanoviski in his interview with me echoed this same information:

> Balkans are very much the land of Roma in a way. As we know in the Ottoman Empire, there was the makamic world, the microtonal influence, and a lot of microtonal influence. So, that's what makes the Romani music different in the Balkans. Let's say in Macedonia, in Serbia, in Albania, in Bulgaria, in Romania, all of these countries, Bosnia, they don't have microtones in their folk music…It's a clean system. But, the only people using microtones in these regions are Romani people. So that's why sometimes you hear those in-between notes. Now with the time everything changes, and with contemporary pop

[125] Ibid., 174.
[126] Ibid., 174.
[127] Jim Samson, *Music in the Balkans,* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 174-180.

> music, we call it turbofolk in the Balkans, they have it, but that's the influence of that kind of music. Of course, the Ottoman Empire had a lot of that. But that never touched the traditional music of the regions. Even, we have some tunes that say in Macedonia, or the other Balkans, where you hear that the melody is very oriental. But still in the traditional way that they are played, there are no microtones, unless some other ethnicity plays them like Romani or Turkish, or even Albanian music - they tend to have more of microtones in traditional than anywhere else but that's because they accepted Islam. Islamic prayers, they have microtones. Greek music has microtones in certain kinds of music I think, but that's because of the Byzantine Empire. Byzantines had a lot of chants, which were very oriental, and they had Byzantine music which is makamic. But it's not as makamic as let's say Arabic or Turkish music.[128]

From Ismail, it is evident what a mix of cultures and styles there are in the Balkans and how the Roma are able to synthesize the many styles to create a unique genre. I asked Ismail if Roma studied makams or just heard them:

> No, they don't study makams, that's why they don't play them right. They play them in their way, which makes another genre of music. So that's what happens. The way of copying that, it becomes something else…I don't think that's the most essential part for the drive for Romani music. I think it's most of it is the feeling and the embellishments. And different music has different embellishments, if you're in Serbia the embellishments are different. Nowadays, it globalizes, because of the internet, it globalized everywhere because of distinctions."[129]

Ismail makes an important point about the Internet and how it has made Romani music more global, particularly within Roma's own diasporic transnational community. Carol Silverman notes that lack of exposure of Romani music on government owned channels in the Balkans is now less of a problem, as Romani musicians are able to post their music videos on YouTube. Carol Silverman recognizes that the Bulgarian clarinetist, Sali Okka, became well known among Roma without even making an album. One may wonder how Romani musicians would make money if all their music was freely available and they did not have record sales. The reason for this is that most Romani musicians make their living from weddings. The YouTube videos help promote the band and on nearly all the videos of musicians who are not

[128] Interview between Matthew Kay and Ismail Lumanovski, January 13th 2017.
[129] Ibid.

internationally famous, there is a telephone number to call and book the band. For example, Sali Okka's video, "Amerika Kyuchek" has his phone number in the information.[130] This particular tune has become very popular and was covered by Stefan Mladenović in the same year it was released by Sali Okka.[131] Notice in the video the contact information. Ismail Lumanovski as part of the New York Gypsy All Stars then covered "America Čoček", this time the cover fuzes both the traditional oriental sounds of the tupan, darabuka, and kanun with rock sounds from the drum set, bass guitar, and keyboard synthesizer with a heavy distorted rock guitar sound.[132] You will notice from this last video that there is no contact information; this is because the YouTube video is intended to promote the record sale rather than the band as it is aimed at an audience in the United States, where the demand for Romani wedding musicians is less than in the Balkans.

In most of the Balkan countries, Roma are the primary source of live music at traditional weddings.[133] In Macedonia, Carol Silverman notes that in Galičnik, an exclusively Macedonian village with no Roma, weddings will not be performed unless the prominent Romani Majovtsi family of musicians plays.[134] In reference to Bulgarian weddings, Timothy Rice, states that wedding musicians were paid handsomely by families, often Romani families, in a display by wealth.[135] Alexander Marković learned that in Vranje, local Serb weddings were demanding for musicians, requiring extensive repertoire and playing for little compensation. With the popularity

[130] Sali Okka, "Amerika Kyucheck," 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYk2MbQwkQM (accessed February 21, 2019).
[131] Stefan Mladenović, 2013, "Amerika Čoček" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pShKdVsz_dI (accessed February 21, 2019).
[132] New York Gypsy All Stars, 2015,"America Style Horo," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmkHfqXfN5I (accessed February 21, 2019).
[133] Margaret H. Beissinger, "Romani (Gypsy) Music Making at Weddings in Post-Communist Romania: Political Transitions and Cultural Adaptations," *Folklorica,* 10, no. 1, 2.
[134] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 171.
[135] Timothy Rice, *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 242.

of the pop and the newer "turbo-folk"[136] music played by Serbian bands, brass bands and traditional music are beginning to fall out of favor.[137] Coupled with the economic downturn, and Serbian weddings being pared down to one-day events rather than the more lavish traditional events, traveling abroad to Romani weddings is a more lucrative enterprise.[138]

One might wonder how Roma afford to pay for weddings. Romani film director, Mincho Stambolov, explained in the film, *Roma Portraits,* that "the family have been saving money for five to ten years but when…it is time for the wedding they are ready to spend everything. After the wedding they might not have a cent left but they really want a big feast."[139] Another family member in the same film told how they sold their livestock to pay for the wedding and then bought them back with the money they were given in gifts.[140]

Romani weddings are elaborate affairs and can last between three to six days depending on what ceremonies they choose to have.[141] The brass band plays an integral role in the ceremony and their ability to move around without electronic amplification makes them ideal for taking part in the outdoor processionals. Stefan explained the band's role in the wedding ceremony:

> In Romani weddings, the person who organized the weddings goes to the band's house. He picks them up from their spot, and then they play the music from that spot to the house of the person who organized the wedding and it's called "the March". So all the guests, and the host of the wedding, go with the band and they play the march throughout that area. Then they go to the [bride's father's] house, and at that moment, the wedding starts.[142]

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[136] Turbo-folk will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
[137] Alexander Marković, "Brass on the Move: Economic Crisis and Professional Mobility among Romani Musicians in Vranje," in *Labour Migrations in the Balkans,* ed. Biljana Sikimić, Petko Trifonov Hristov, Biljana Golubović.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 84.
[140] Ibid., 84.
[141] Ibid., 85.
[142] Interview between Matthew Kay and Stefan Mladenović, August 30th 2015.

As this procession takes place outside in the neighborhood, the wedding becomes a celebration for the whole community. After the march, Stefan explains a special famous dance that is common to both Serbian and Romani weddings, the "Svekrvino Kolo", or "Mother-in-law's Kolo":

> The mother of the groom, she starts to play a special dance which is for her. The mother is in the front [of the line], and she starts to dance that kolo. This is the first dance and it can last, in Romani weddings, one hour. The same tune with improvisations for one hour. In Serbian [weddings], no, five to ten minutes. But in Romani [weddings] the mother-in-law is dancing for one hour.[143]

Although I never had the opportunity to witness a Romani wedding, Nenad and Miša did show me Miša's daughter and son-in-law's wedding on YouTube.[144] On observing the video there are a few things to note. The wedding celebration is outside and visible to the whole community. The musicians point their instrument directly at the groom and mother-in-law making them the focus of the dance and keeping everyone's attention upon them.[145] There is a main tune interspersed with improvisations and the distinctive beat is constant throughout. Even with these breaks for solos, the musicians' stamina and endurance is impressive as this is only a portion of the festivities. The mother-in-law who leads the dance carries a decorated sieve; this is a symbol linking the fertility of the land to the fertility of the bride.[146] The money in the headbands of the musicians is "baksheesh", or tips from playing.

Alexander Marković noticed that the younger generations of Serbs felt the brass music to be "stupid" and "old-fashioned". Some people commented that they did not like the practice of

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[143] Ibid.
[144] Wedding of Fabijan and Jovanka Mamutević, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTlGshoO4fw
[145] Alexander Marković, "Beat That Drum! Exploring the Politics of Performance among Roma Brass Musicians in Vranje, Serbia," *Forum Folkloristika*, 2, Winter 2013. https://eefc.org/post-folklorista/beat-that-drum/ (accessed March 25, 2017)
[146] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91.

playing into the face of celebrants to obtain tips, putting them in an uncomfortable and embarrassing situation if they were unable to produce cash. Nenad did not engage in this kind of behavior; his reputation is such that he can charge an upfront fee in advance and celebrants will tip freely with no pressure:

> We arrange everything in advance, how much it will cost, and then we will go and play. If the people who celebrate, the guests, want to give, then we take the money. If they don't give them then no, that's fine. When we play, we don't ask for money. We want to satisfy the guests, then the guests give. We don't ask: "Give me, put money on my forehead - no!" We play, and if we satisfy the guest, then they give us [money].[147]

Alexander Marković in another document notes how the order in which members of each family dance is important, and the way in which they tip musicians displays their status and wealth.[148] The video in the previous footnote is of a čoček at a wedding in Vranje, and shows how tipping can become an exhibition of wealth.[149]

In Serbian weddings, celebrants have been known to display their power and privilege over Roma musicians.[150] A common practice can be twisting bank notes, putting them into a bottle, placing the bottle in front of the musician teasing him, and only giving the musician the money when he has satisfied the celebrants.[151] Not all musicians will tolerate such behavior and one musician stated that he will break off a performance if he sees such a practice.[152]

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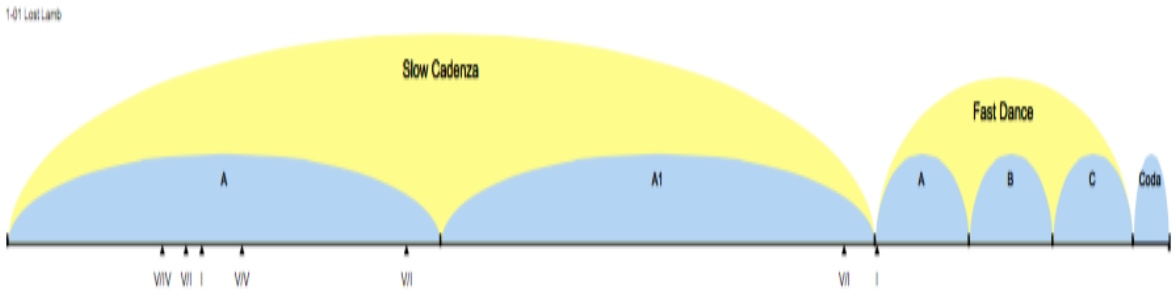
147 Interview between Matthew Kay and Nenad Mladenović, August 24th 2015.
148 Alexander Marković, "Beat That Drum! Exploring the Politics of Performance among Roma Brass Musicians in Vranje, Serbia," *Forum Folkloristika*, 2, Winter 2013.
149 "Dancing Čoček in Vranje," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-qSP-OZYck - this video shows the tipping practices at a Romani wedding celebration.
150 Alexander Marković, "Beat That Drum! Exploring the Politics of Performance among Roma Brass Musicians in Vranje, Serbia," *Forum Folkloristika*, 2, Winter 2013. https://eefc.org/post-folklorista/beat-that-drum/ (accessed March 25, 2017)
151 Alexander Marković, "Beat That Drum! Exploring the Politics of Performance among Roma Brass Musicians in Vranje, Serbia," *Forum Folkloristika*, 2, Winter 2013. https://eefc.org/post-folklorista/beat-that-drum/ (accessed March 25, 2017)
152 Ibid.

Traditionally, one of the first songs to be played at a Serbian wedding is the Serbian folk tunes is "Izgubljeno Jagnje" (The Lost Lamb).[153] Because of the syncretic nature of Romani music and performance styles, it is difficult and inappropriate to describe the music purely in either Western classical terms or Turkish makamic terms. Using this piece as an example, I propose that in Romani music neither Western classical music or Turkish makam theory are exclusive of one another but integrated together, creating the same tonic-dominant relationship found in Western music. Therefore, I will describe them as a hybrid of both.

The piece opens with a long, slow, plaintive, cadenza-like passage played freely by the solo trumpet, with the other instruments joining at the cadential points. This slow section is in two equal parts, the second part a variation of the first part (A - A^1). The slow section settles on a C major chord to resolve to the B section, which is F major.[154] The fast B dance section is structured as three short sections, all repeated, with a coda (A-B-C). Figure 4 shows the structure of the piece.[155]

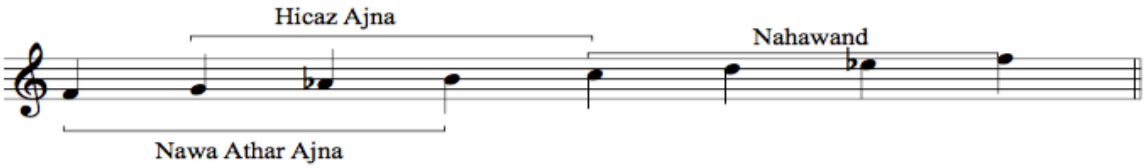
Figure 4. Structure of "Izgubljeno Jagnje"



[153] Conversation with Mirko Stefanović, August 10 2017.
[154] In describing the tonality, everything is according to the trumpet that the music is played on which is in B flat. I have chosen to do this because, as a trumpet player, it makes more sense musically and for the performance practice. Therefore, all the pitches actually sound a whole step lower than I am describing.
[155] A more detailed bubble diagram with phrase structure is included in the appendices.

The slow cadenza section is based around the *Nakriz* makam from the Makam Nawa Athar family, which is constructed of two sets of tetrachords or *Jins* (singular, *Ajna*), *Nawa Athar* and *Nahawand,* with also the *Hicaz Ajna* within the two other *jins* as shown in figure 5.[156]

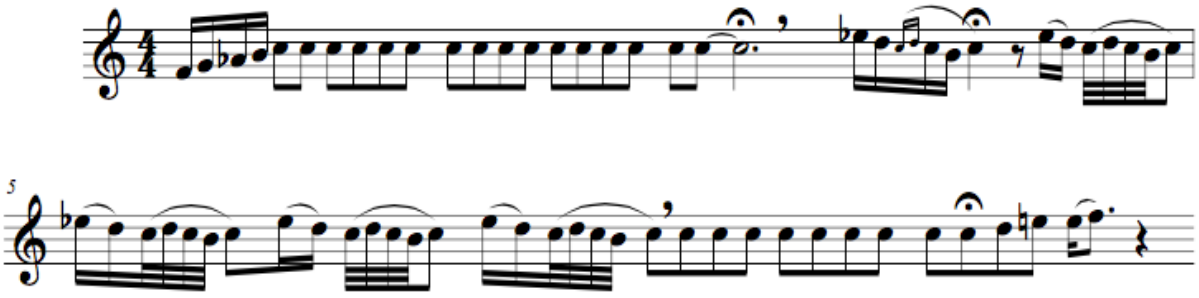
Figure 5. Nakriz makam.



There is a temptation to label the makam used in "Izgubljeno Jagnje", *Hijaz*, what in Western terms is the harmonic minor beginning on the fifth degree. With the prevalence of the augmented second, it is a common sound in Romani and Jewish music.[157] This interpretation would be incorrect as the tonal centers of "Izgubljeno Jagnje" are clearly based around F and C (tonic-dominant).

The opening demonstrates the tonic-dominant key relationship and the use of the *Nakriz* makam as shown in figure 6:

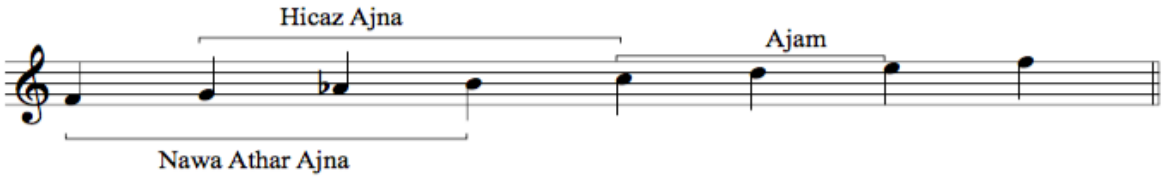
Figure 6. Opening of "Izgubljeno Jagnje"



[156] The website *Maqamworld* was used as a reference for the different makams and tetrachords, http://www.maqamworld.com/maqamat/nawa-athar.html#nikriz. Accessed March 27, 2017.
[157] The famous Jewish tune, "Hava Nagila" is based on the Hicaz makam.

Notice that at the end of this passage, the upper *Ajna* will be substituted with the *Ajam* trichord, which contains the same three notes as the western major scale as shown in figure 7.

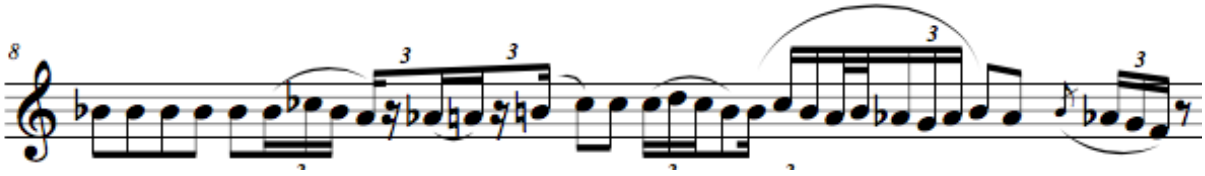
Figure 7. Ajam trichord in context of the makam



I propose that this is specifically to increase momentum to the F when it serves to function as the dominant of the sub-dominant (B-flat).

Figure 8 shows the digression to B-flat acting as a pre-dominant tonality, moving to the dominant where the pitch is centered around the dominant (C) finally resting on the tonic (F). When the harmony does move to B-flat, all of the surrounding tones are chromatic, only implying the chromatic scale.

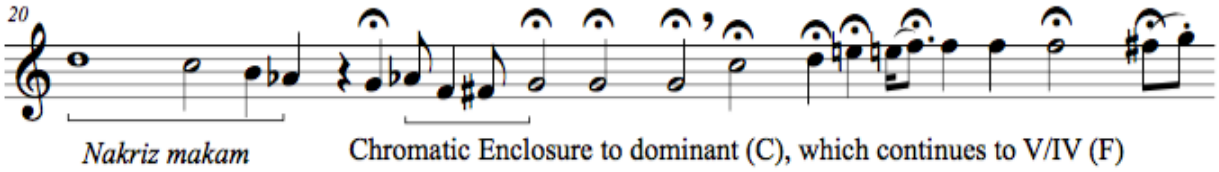
Figure 8. Pre-dominant, dominant, tonic voice leading



Notice also in the previous passage how the augmented second is accentuated by the ornamentation.

The cadential phrase in both sections of the cadenza is the descending *Nakriz* makam, chromatically enclosing the G with an A-flat and F-sharp. Figure 9 show how the three chords are C major chords (B-flat concert) that modulate to F major.

Figure 9. Modulation to F major



The first time, the cadence acts as a resolution to a variation of the beginning. The F behaves as the dominant of the sub-dominant as in the first section, but this time it is extended further chromatically to a G creating more tension as it resolves to B-flat. Figure 10, in contrast, shows the passage in the first A section:

Figure 10. Harmonic analysis of the first A section

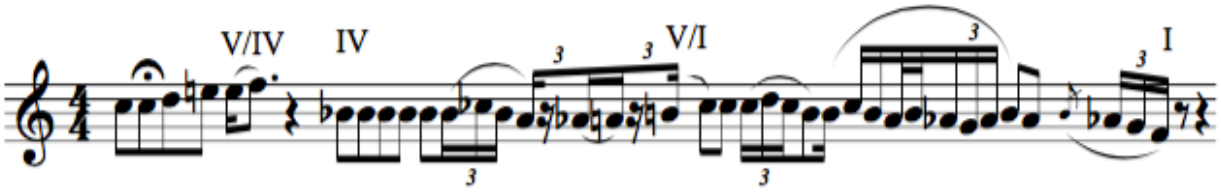


Figure 11 shows the variation in the A^1 section. Notice how the ascending *Ajam* trichord is extended rhythmically, the E natural acting as a leading tone and then the resolution to IV is delayed. When the sub-dominant harmony finally arrives, the focus is on the third and the fifth rather than the root in the A section as shown in figure 11.

Figure 11. Harmonic and melodic variation in A^1 section

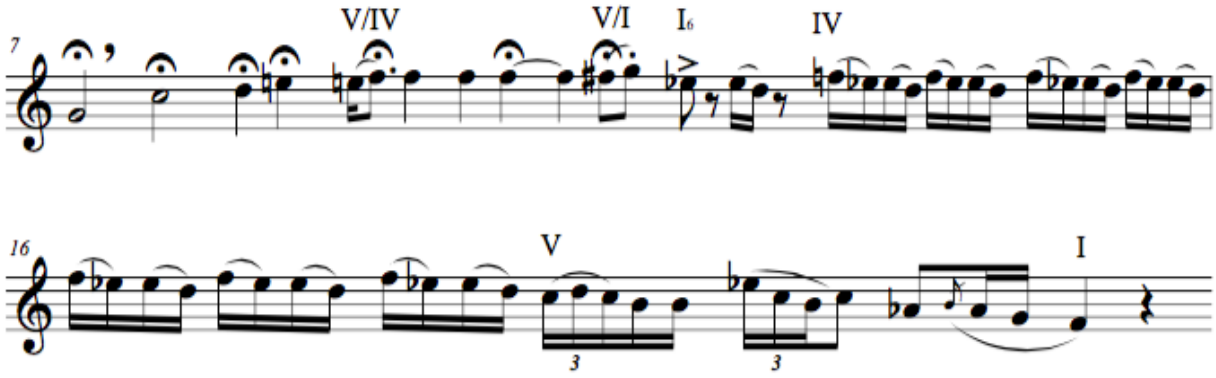
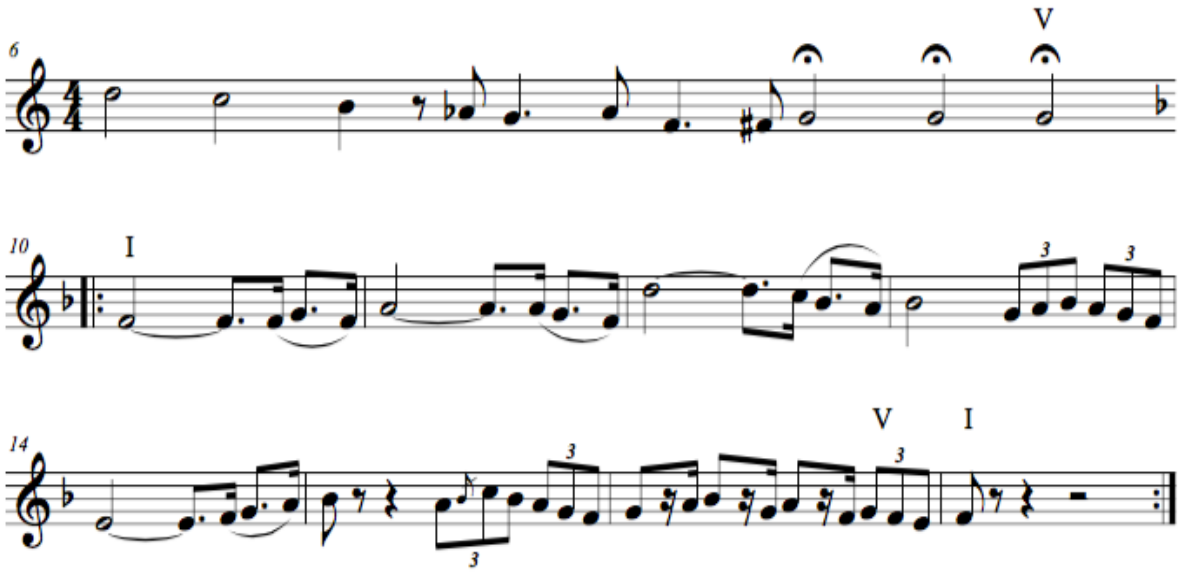


Figure 12 shows how the second cadential point uses the same chromatic enclosure, again settling on a C major chord, resolving strongly to the key of the fast B-section, F major.

Figure 12. Second cadential point

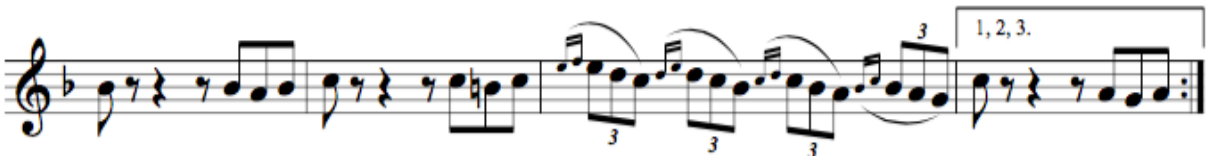


The section is entirely diatonic and, other than the embellishments, does not employ any oriental influence. I have heard four recordings of this piece of music, the three recordings by Romani

bands had the slow cadenza at the beginning, whereas the Serbian recording only started in the fast dance section.[158] I can only speculate, perhaps the oriental sound of the cadenza is not to the Serbian taste, or the cadenza is a Romani invention composed to precede the dance. From this one example, we can learn that Romani music combines both Eastern and Western elements as discussed and that even when Turkish makams are used, a tonic-dominant relationship can still exist, especially with a prolongation of the dominant in the cadenza section that finally resolved to the tonic when the dance begins.

Learning and playing this piece has given me an understanding both of the musical language and the performance practice. The dance section is characterized by the dotted rhythms and the triplet eighth notes. In the C-section, I found it difficult to add the grace notes and maintain the triplet eighth notes as I originally transcribed in figure 13.

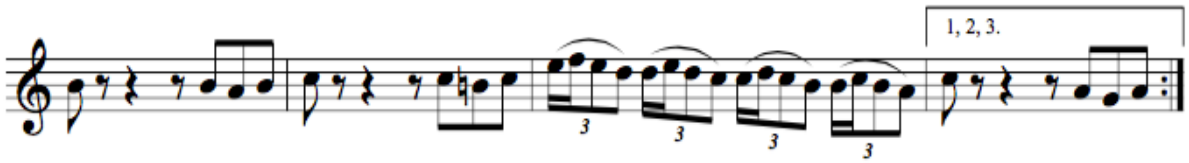
Figure 13. Initial performance interpretation of C section



[158] The three Romani recordings were by Bakija Bakić, Boban Marković, and Milan Nikolić Donja. The Serbian recording was by Radovan Babić under the title, "Gunner's Old Kolo."

Practicing this passage, I always found it to be clumsy and awkward. From closer listening, it seems that the trumpets are playing the following shown in figure 14.

Figure 14. Second performance interpretation of C section



The passages above highlight the difficulty I had replicating the various embellishments and also how they differed. It also shows how difficult it can be for a western classically trained musician to replicate a traditional musical style of playing. When I asked Ismail if he could write some embellishments down he told me, "No, if I could I would have written a book." He did however explain how I might practice incorporating the different embellishments into my playing:

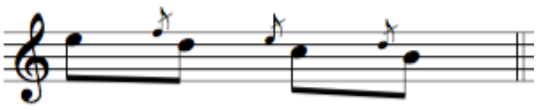
> There are a lot of different embellishments. If you go from country to country the embellishment changes. I can tell specific embellishments from any country. They're very different, and the feel is different. I think focus on something - on a particular tune. Learning one tune or one solo is good. Because in one tune there are different embellishments, or there are different kinds of emotions that you get used to it if you play it more and more, you get used to it. And that kind of embellishment can appear in any other song. Because, once you get it, you find things that are repetitive. Faster or slower. So if you focus on one thing you develop.[159]

Ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice, in his experiences learning the gaida[160] in Bulgaria, learned that, "melody and ornamentation were, from a player's conceptual and and physical point of view, unified into a single concept as ways of moving from tone to tone."[161] A typical practice Rice mentions, and that I have heard frequently in listening to Romani music, is how in

[159] Interview between Matthew Kay and Ismail Lumanovski, January 13th 2017.
[160] Bulgarian bagpipe.
[161] Timothy Rice, *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 84-88.

a descending scale, an ornamental upper neighbor is added to the preceding note as shown in figure 15.

Figure 15. Idiomatic form of Romani embellishment



Rice's teacher, Kostadin, a non-Romani Bulgarian, appreciated this style of playing telling him, "Gypsies always add something sweet to the music."[162]

Rice noted that improvisation was mainly a Romani practice, using the *mane* or *taksim* from the Turkish tradition of improvising rhythmically freely over a beat. Rice tells how Kostadin learned a *mane* from a Romani musician but in accordance to his own village practice and traditions, turned it into a fixed composition. He maintained what he termed an 'oriental' quality by including "the augmented second, glissandi, melodic sequences and timbral manipulations."[163] What Rice describes is a third generation of an interpretation of a musical practice. First, there is the Romani interpretation of Turkish music, followed by a Bulgarian's interpretation of a Romani interpretation. Rice's perspective of Kostadin's interpretation also highlights some of the most characteristic elements of the Romani musical style.

[162] Ibid., 86.
[163] Timothy Rice, *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 109.

Chapter 3. A Musical Crossroads

18 August 2015

After around a week in Belgrade we finally made it back to Vranje. I was eager to go and visit Nenad, whose band won at Guča. Mirko told me that there was a big celebration in town and everyone was proud that he had won. We visited Nenad and his family and everyone wanted to know why the whole of my right leg was in a cast. I tried to explain as best as I could. Miša told me that if I had gone with them, it probably would not have happened. He was genuinely upset for me. Nenad asked me to play some of the tunes that he had taught me. I also showed him that I have transcribed "Izgubljeno Jagnje" off a Bakija Bakić CD that I had purchased in Belgrade. It is likely that it is either Nenad, or his father, playing the piece that I transcribed. Nenad was surprised, but corrected me on a few mistakes that I made. He then took the music away from me and made me play it from memory. He corrected me sharply every time that I made a mistake. He then taught me "Vrtlog", Dejan Petrović's popular hit. Nenad told me that they are having a concert at the music school the next evening and that I should be there.

The next day we took a full bus to Skopje, Macedonia, to see an orthopedic surgeon to check on my knee. We would have preferred a taxi, but taxi drivers were unwilling to take a family our size across the border. At the border there was a long delay. The border police had to come on the bus to check everyone's bags and the bus was hot, crowded, and stuffy. Entering Macedonia the landscape changed. I noticed that there are more mosques and the architecture is more Turkish in style. The strength of the Ottoman presence is felt more strongly here. As we enter Skopje, I notice the Millenial Cross on top of Mount Vodno, the largest Christian cross in the world. Macedonia's ethic diversity is as rich as its history. Home to Macedonians, Albanians, Turkish, Macedonians, it has been ruled by the Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, Serbs, Bulgarians

and Nazis, and is another classic example of a country torn apart by empires. In the 3rd century BC, however, it was the center of Alexander the Great's empire, which stretched from North Africa to India.

The hospital in Skopje was clean and modern. According to the nurse and doctor, my knee was "Super", no infection. They gave me a letter for the travel insurance company telling me that I had to extend my stay and would not be able to travel back until the end of August. After leaving the hospital, we went to the Turkish bazaar, which I hobbled through on crutches. It was similar to the souk that we would visit when we lived in Qatar, and the bazaar we visited in Istanbul. The call to prayer sounded from a nearby mosque, and stores sold spices and souvenirs of Mother Theresa, who was also born in Skopje.

It was another arduous journey back to Vranje with another long wait at the border and frequent stops as the bus kept overheating. Each time the bus would overheat, everyone would get off and the driver would fill the radiator using pop bottles filled with water. Eventually a replacement bus came. We finally arrived back in Vranje at 8:45 p.m.; it had taken us four hours to travel the sixty miles between Vranje and Skopje. At the bus station in Vranje we sat in the kafana at the bus station and ordered food. The children played outside until a suddent storm came. The children found the torrential rain great fun but ran back inside the kafana for shelter. There was traditional Serbian music playing and the kafana was worn and shabby. I liked it. It felt nostalgic and comfortable and I hoped to stay longer in the country.

After we ate, I headed to the music school dropping Alyn and the children off at the apartment on the way. I arrived at the music school and it was deserted. I heard some piano music in one room and I entered. Nenad's band were there, eating, and Stefan was playing some ideas on the piano. They were pleased to see me and invited me to sit down.

Nenad asked whether I could arrange for his band to tour America. I told him that I would try; I would need to speak to some people who can arrange it. I hope I can make it so Nenad's band can come over to America. At around 10:30 pm, people start to trickle in. There are some discussions and a decision is made to do the concert in the courtyard. The band opened with "Kalishnikov". The band played with such energy. The audience went wild and started dancing. After "Kalishnikov", they played a version of "El Condor Pasa"; again the atmosphere is one of joyful exuberant dancing, in circles. I wish that folk music from my own country could create such a reaction. I regret not having my video camera but I managed to film some of the concert on my phone. I stood on the balcony wishing I could join in the dancing. Nenad motioned up to me and asked if I would like to play. Of course I did. He told me to wait and in a little bit, he motioned me down.

I came down the stairs and joined the band. Miša gave me a cup of warm beer, which I drank. He offered me another but I declined. Within the band it was extremely loud, even for me as a brass player who is accustomed to loud music. The horns were deafening me. I tried to move away from the directions of the bells. It did not bother Miša though; he is used to it. When the band finished their song, Nenad spoke to the audience and introduced me. Nenad told me to play "Djurdjevdan" (Ederlezi). As soon as I began playing everyone instantly recognized the tune and started to sing and dance along. Stefan encouraged me by looking at me and playing along. When I finished everyone cheered. They were pleased to hear a foreigner who is interested enough in their small city, to learn their music. I thanked Stefan for helping me and he replied, "You are our friend, we will play together again." After the concert, the mayor came up to me, shook my hand, and said, "Welcome to our city."

The concert at the music school showed me how important the brass band was in Serbian culture, especially the Romani bands in southern Serbia. To see people getting so excited about traditional brass band music made me envious of their love of their own traditional culture and music. The discourse between traditional and modern music, local and global music, urban and rural music and how it represents aspects of Serbian identity can be explored further in Serbia's recent history. While communist countries in the Balkans were sponsoring national music traditions and censoring it to match the propaganda agenda of the country, most notably the Koutev Ensemble in Bulgaria, true rural folk music was disappearing.[164] Together with the migration of villagers to the cities, a new genre of newly composed folk music emerged with songs composed in a folk style, but with Western influences, such as classical and popular music.

During the 1990s, another branch of the newly composed folk music emerged, called turbo-folk, a term invented by Serbian pop artist, poet and musician, Rambo Amadeus. Turbo-folk had some folk music elements, mixed with oriental and modern MTV elements. On my first night in the hostel in Belgrade, I heard a song that had a trumpet playing, and sounded similar to the Romani-trumpet style. I looked at the computer screen where the music was coming from, the subtitles told me that it was MC Yankoo featuring Milica Todorović and was called "Moje Zlato."[165] The music was typical of the kind of music video that would appear on MTV. There was sexualized dancing against bold colors of pink, orange and blue, designer clothes and sunglasses, but also the oriental music and images of the rotary flügel horn played in a Romani-style and belly dancing, and the use of folk instruments such as the darabuka drum and

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[164] Donna Buchanan, *Performing Democracy: Bulgarian Music and Musicians in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 132-223.
[165] MC Yankoo featuring Milica Todorović, "Moje Zlato", official video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mKnLVqDCIM (accessed February 11, 2019).

accordion. The girl who worked at the hostel came and turned the music off and told me, "It's Serbian. Turbo-folk. The worst kind of music – turbo-folk."

Most people that I spoke to had a low opinion of turbo-folk. Speaking with another worker in the hostel in Belgrade, Johann, he told me that no one in the hostel liked turbo-folk and they all played in punk bands. He also wrote down a list of "ex-yu" bands that played punk and rock music. He told me how before the break up of Yugoslavia, many musicians where sponsored by the state. One of the largest stars of state-sponsored newly composed folk music was Lepa Brena. Her official video to the song, "Jugoslovenka" (Yugoslavian Girl), pictures Lepa Brena in various beautiful scenes from around the Yugoslav countries waving a Yugoslavian flag, or with a group of women all running, waving the Yugoslavian flag.[166] The lyrics for the second verse translate as:

> My eyes are Adriatic Sea,
> My hair is Panonian wheat.
> Wistful is my Sloven soul,
> I'm Yugoslavian.[167]

This verse alone expresses the Yugoslav vision of "brotherhood and unity". Her eyes come from four of the slavic states: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Slovenia; all on the Adriatic Sea. Her wistful soul is from Slovenia in the northwest, and her hair is from Panonia, an ancient Roman province that covered parts of northern Croatia and Serbia. The mix of all these ethnic identities makes her one race, Yugoslavian. Also, in the video and music, there are oriental influences with Lepa Brena belly-dancing to ensure that those who identify more with the East are represented. Sadly, it would take more than a kitsch pop song to keep Yugoslavia united.

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[166] Lepa Brena, "Jugoslovenka," official video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsKn5KX6XnU (accessed February 13, 2019).
[167] https://lyricstranslate.com/en/Jugoslovenka-Yugoslavian.html (accessed February 13, 2019).

When I spoke with Nikola, Mirko's son who met us in Belgrade he had a similar attitude towards turbo-folk. Nikola told me that he liked rock, but turbo-folk was more for people with less intelligence. He explained that turbo-folk came out during the 1990s when everything was going badly in Serbia and that it was promoted by the government to convince the people that life was good. Nikola sees turbo-folk as superficial and that it has little relevance to folk music. He explained how during that period, the 1990s were a great period for the rest of the world while Bill Clinton was bombarding Serbia. He seemed very bitter and explained that he was 13-years-old when the war was happening.

The antithesis of turbo-folk is rock music, which can be seen as a symbol of cosmopolitanism and anti-war sentiments. Turbo-folk, on the other had is described by Irena Šentevska as:

> The "soundtrack" of the Milošević regime…accordingly understood as music for gangsters, who made a fortune through war profiteering….*Turbo-folk* became the music of Serbia's isolation, a sexy accompaniment to Serbian porn nationalism or Balkan hardcore, a catalyst for pro-Fascist sentiments, even music of ethnic cleansing. Moreover, *turbo-folk* aided in redefining and homogenizing the Serbian national identity, and in denying war trauma in other parts of the former Yugoslavia.[168]

Even though turbo-folk's largest star, Ceca Ražnatović was married to Željko Ražnatović (Arkan), an infamous international career and war criminal, not all turbo-folk musicians were sympathetic to Milošević's cause. When turbo-folk musician, Dragan Kojić Keba wanted to play at students' anti-government protests in 1996, he was turned down on account of his musical identity. Therefore, despite the music associations with ideologies, sometimes musicians adopt opposite positions.[169]

[168] Irena Šentevska, "Turbo-folk as the Agent of Empire: On Discourses of Identity and Difference in Popular Culture," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 44, No. 3 (Fall 2014): 413-441.
[169] Ibid.

While Ceca's husband was in the business of ethnically cleansing Serbia of Muslims, the music industry was doing its own ethnic cleansing. Saša Popović of the record label and production company, Grand Production, and associate of Lepa Brena, complained that Serbian music had too many oriental traits such as Turkish, Arabian, and Indian, and sought to remove these influences from the music.[170]

Serbia's relationship with orientalism is complex. On the one hand, there is what Irena Šentevska describes as "nesting orientalisms," or where one region views another region as more primitive or conservative than their own.[171] Similar parallels can be made in the United States where people in the south or Appalachia may be viewed as less progressive than those on the coasts, or in Britain where people in the north where I am from are viewed as more "primitive" and working class, compared to those in the south, who are considered educated cosmopolitans and work in the city. In Serbia's case, the more to the south and east one goes, the more "primitive" the region.

The oriental influences, therefore, carry a negative or positive connotation depending on the context. To the more educated, elite classes in the Balkan states, especially those in the west such as Croatia and Albania, and the elite in Serbia who favor "ethnically pure" folk music, oriental influences are seen as a contamination to their western European identity. Ironically, the addition of MTV-like idioms to music, such as that found in turbo-folk, is seen as a further contamination of the music from American influences. The positive connotations of oriental influences are usually viewed by a younger, perhaps poorer demographic, as positive for the same reasons as they are viewed negatively: primitivism, "otherness", and gratuitous sexuality. The mixed attitudes to the different influences, whether it be oriental, western European, or

[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

American, may be represented in what Alexander Kiossev describes as "the self-colonizing metaphor", where people will sometimes subconsciously and voluntarily identify and adopt the cultural values of a larger "other", such as western Europe, the Hapsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire, or the United States.[172] When hybrid models of music emerge, such as turbo-folk or brass band music, it enables people to reconcile the local or traditional (folk) with the global or modern (turbo).

The rise in popularity of Serbian world music in the 2000s, helped Serbia rebrand its image. The two main music festivals in Serbia, Guča and EXIT, helped establish Serbia as an attractive destination for festival goers. In 2007, EXIT was awarded "Best European Festival" by Festival Awards UK, based on votes from fans around the world. The EXIT festival has attracted popular acts from around the world such as The White Stripes, Lauryn Hill, Snoop Dogg and Greta van Fleet. EXIT represents the cosmopolitan cutting-edge side of Serbia while Guča represents the traditional folk side of Serbia. Both festivals naturally present Serbia as a friendly, hospitable, party-loving nation and a place to come for a good time. Neither rock music nor turbo-folk is exclusively represented at either festival, thereby extinguishing political tensions, affiliations, and identity to the music.

It is world music and Romani brass music, however, that arguably rebrands Serbia's image and cultural heritage. In 2000, an independent Belgrade-media based company, B92, started a project called *Srbija: Sounds Global* (SSG). The project included four compilation CDs that encompassed the rich and diverse tradition of ethnic music in Serbia, including Romani, Jewish, Hungarian, and Serbian music. These compilations were enormously successful. Soon,

[172] Alexander Kiossev, "The Self-Colonizing Metaphor," Atlas of Transformation, http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/s/self-colonization/the-self-colonizing-metaphor-alexander-kiossev.html (accessed February 13, 2019).

politicians were adopting the *Srbija: Sounds Global* label to distance Serbia from the polarization of the 1990s and provide an image of a diverse, yet, unified Serbia. For example, politician, Goran Svilanović, stated in 2005:

> There are so many heritages for which we can say with certainty that are parts of the regional identity, but it would be hard to determine where exactly they originated…Serbia sounds global, both at EXIT and in Guča, regardless of personal taste.[173]

SSG's creator, Bojan Djorjdjević also explained how SSG and Serbian world music could provide an antidote to Serbia's political problems and negative image: "Serbia is neither Milosević, nor the protests, nor the economic crisis, nor the bombing. [We wanted to show that] Serbia can also be this - good music; and world music is perhaps its most interesting genre."[174]

Ironically, the factors that have earned Serbia, and the Balkans in general, their bad reputation are also what seem to make the Balkans appealing, or at least that is the way Serbia has been marketed. The Balkans has in many respects been stereotyped as primitive, barbaric, and warring. Evidence of this stereotype can be found in the production of the television show, *Xena: Warrior Princess.* Set in ancient times, the show is a mix of various elements such as Greek mythology with the Greek god of war, Hercules, Roman battles, crucifixions, medieval Europe, and ancient Egypt, China, and India.[175] To an American audience, historical accuracy is inconsequential; the main point is the other-worldliness of the show. It tells the tale of Xena, a princess, who became a warrior as penance for previous offenses as she travels the countryside fighting evil.

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[173] Branislava (Brana) Mijatović, "The Musical (Re)branding of Serbia," in *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe,* ed. Nadia Kaneva (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 220.
[174] Ibid., 218.
[175] Natalie Abrams, "Xena: Warrior Princess: An Oral Herstory," Entertainment, https://ew.com/article/2016/06/17/xena-warrior-princess-oral-history/ (accessed February 20, 2019).

The score was composed by Michigan composer, Joe LoDuca. He had heard the Bulgarian State Choir, *Le mystère des voix bulgares,* and felt that the powerful sound of the female choir would be ideally suited to the female warrior. LoDuca contacted Tim Rice, ethnomusicologist and specialist in Bulgarian music, if he could find appropriate song texts for a choir to sing. Tim Rice knew of a number of Bulgarian songs that described how Bulgarian women, called *bairaktarki* (female flag bearers), fought with guerrillas *(haiduti)* against the Turks. As flag bearers, they were the first targets of the Turks and considered to be the most courageous of warriors. The women would join the guerrillas either to be with their husbands or because they had been dishonored in some way and had no place in normal village life. [176]

In the opening credits the music opens with a gaida playing. The gaida are traditional Bulgarian bagpipes, usually played by shepherds to pass the time. LoDuca's use of the gaida emphasizes the pastoral and natural other-worldliness of the show. As the scene switches to the battle scene, the music is orchestral with an irregular meter (2 + 2 + 3) and the choir sing the song in a style almost identical to the choir, *Le mystère des voix bulgares.* Xena gives her signature war cry, which is a ululation.[177] Neither the choir or the ululation bear any relation to battle in real-life: ululations are typically used by Arabic women to celebrate weddings and the Bulgarian choir was used to promote national folk music. These musical gestures reflect how an American or Western European might perceive music that resembles powerful females from a far-off land.[178]

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[176] Timothy Rice, *Music in Bulgaria: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 75-59.
[177] *Xena: Warrior Princess,* first episode, https://www.nbc.com/xena-warrior-princess/video/sins-of-the-past/3799309 (accessed February 21, 2019)
[178] Ibid.

This sense of exoticization has been part of the allure towards world music, where the difference between the "civilized" and commodified West, and the more "exotic" or "primitive", and, therefore, more authentic "other" is emphasized. Evidence of the exoticization of music from the Balkans is reflected in the stereotypes represented in *Xena: Warrior Princess,* and people's perceptions of Guča as "primitive". While the Balkan nations aspire to align themselves with Western Europe as a sign of progress,[179] there seems to be a commercial advantage of promoting a primitivism that attracts tourists.[180] Certainly, from my perspective, while there were many differences between Serbia and the United States, I would neither describe the people as primitive, nor exotic. The primitivism or exoticism is mainly created to portray the country in either a positive or negative light.

The controversial film, *Underground,* not only embodies such sense of primitivism, but helped bring Romani music, Serbian brass bands, and the Guča trumpet festival to international attention.[181] Directed by Bosnian-born Serb, Emir Kusturica, with a soundtrack by Goran Bregović, it was winner of the Palmes D'Or at the Festival De Cannes in 1995. The film tells the story of a Serb, Marko, and Montenegrin, Blacky, and how they dealt with the Nazi occupation in the Second World War. Blacky was a partisan fighter who was captured by the Nazis but escaped with the aid of Marko and sought refuge with a community of people underground. After the war ends, Marko becomes a public hero but continues to keep the underground refuge, feeding them lies that the Second World War is still continuing, meanwhile having people work

[179] Donna Buchanan, *Performing Democracy: Bulgarian Music and Musicians in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 45-51.
[180] Jelena Gligorijević, "World Music Festivals and Tourism: a Case Study of Serbia's Guča Trumpet Festival," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 2 (2014): 140-141.
[181] Branislava (Brana) Mijatović, "The Musical (Re)branding of Serbia," in *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe,* ed. Nadia Kaneva (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 222.

for him. Fifty years on, a pet monkey accidently shoots a hole in the wall from a tank, which was also underground, and Blacky finally walks out into the Balkan wars. He becomes a warlord, directing troops, and searches for his son who drowned in the Danube. The film ends with a wedding banquet in the afterlife, where all the characters are united again in a celebration amid a backdrop of a gypsy brass band playing čoček. Marko asks Blacky if he will forgive him and Blacky answers him affirmatively but he will not forget the past.

There are various analyses of this film with differing perspectives on whether or not it is subversive, or pro-Serbian propaganda. The various political allegories liken the underground community to the communist state, being fed lies to keep production going. The final scene in the afterlife shows reconciliation, but also a reluctance to forget the past; such has been the history of the Serbian people.[182] Giorgio Bertellini describes Kusturica's style as "Balkanist", a negative and antihistorical stereotype[183] dating back to the nineteenth century that depicts the Balkans as violent, hedonistic, primitive and politically irresponsible.[184] Ironically, despite Kusturica's Balkanism in *Underground,* it received harsh criticism as being "pure fascist propaganda" or as French critic Alain Finkelkraut put it, "a rock, post-modern, over-the-top, hip American version of the most driveling and lying Serbian propaganda."[185] Naturally, rumors of the film receiving funding from Serbian national television did not help, a claim denied by Kusturica.

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[182] Giorgio Bertellini, *Emir Kusturica,* (Urbana,IL: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 74-95.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Andrew Hammon, "Typologies of the East: On Distinguishing Balkanism and Orientalism," *Nineteenth Century Contexts,* 29, Nos. 2-3, 2007, 201-218. This article goes into detail about the various differences between Balkanism and Orientalism drawing on Edward Saïd's methodology and referencing journals of nineteenth century British writers. These writings display the attitudes of the "West" to the other, in this case the Balkans and the Orient and how the negative stereotypes were formed and exist today, especially after the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s.
[185] Daniel J. Goulding, "*Emir Kusturica* by Dina Iordanova review," *Senses of Cinema*, 26, 2003, sensesofcinema.com/2003/book-reviews/kusturica/ (accessed March 7, 2019)

Nikola told me that his parents did not like *Underground* when I asked him about it. He told me that they felt it portrayed Serbians in a bad light, and that people would think all Serbians would behave like that. Nor did the famous Romani singer, Šaban Barjamović like Kusturica's films, despite collaborating with Kusturica on several occasions:

> He's winning all these awards in the film world but he's only showing the black side of Gypsy culture. It's much easier to show the begging, the stealing. But he doesn't show the Gypsies who go to work in the factory every day, the good ones. It's easier to work with scum. He's like Bregović, he puts things upside down. He shows the worst side of Gypsies.[186]

Music and the Romani brass band played a central diegetic role in *Underground.* The opening features the brass band running down the street behind a buggy carrying Marko and Blacky who are drinking heavily, shouting and shooting their pistols into the air.[187] The tune the band plays is called "Kalishnikov" and was one of the first tunes that Nenad taught me. "Kalishnikov" opens with a soulful trumpet fanfare accompanied by a drone followed by a fast, wild and virtuosic section. "Kalishnikov" is the tune that I use to open up every gig that I play with my band, *Slavistar,* as it is grabs the attention of the audience so well. Throughout the film, the band plays exuberantly, encouraging both the hedonism and celebrations, such as weddings. The band also accompanies subtle political jokes: at one point the band starts to play the Chetnik anthem and someone informs that band that Blacky is a member of the partisans and the band immediately switches to play the Communist anthem.[188]

There is no doubt that *Underground* played a huge role in the rise of popularity of the Serbian/Romani brass band and the Guča festival. Many of the tunes that were composed, or

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[186] Garth Cartwright, *Princes Amongst Men: Journeys with Gypsy Musicians,* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2005), 64.
[187] *Underground* - opening scene, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_2wYdJ_6DI (accessed March 11, 2019)
[188] Giorgio Bertellini, *Emir Kusturica,* (Urbana,IL: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 74-95.

more accurately, arranged by Goran Bregović, now form part of the staple repertoire of the brass bands. While I was with Nenad and Stefan, they taught me two tunes from *Underground*: "Kalishnikov" and "Mesečina". Goran Bregović is now an international star who initially became famous as guitarist for Yugoslavian rock-folk fusion band, Bijelo Dugme. Nenad was excited to tell me that he played with Bregović: "We play with Goran Bregović. He is our great friend. He is from Sarajevo and lives in Belgrade." Another trumpet player that I spoke to had a different opinion and told me that Bregović was a thief. There are many examples where Romani musicians feel that Bregović has appropriated their music. One of the main songs in the film, "Mesečina",[189] is based on Romani singer, Šaban Barjamović's song, "Djeli Mara".[190] On the album credits, Bregović credits Barjamović's name along with his as joint composer and arranger. Barjamović, however, felt as though he had been tricked into giving his music away. When Claude Cahn, a French lawyer from the European Roma Rights Centre offered to represent Barjamović, Barjamović remembers signing documents for a set fee to use his music but had no copies of them: "They took my song," Barjamović told Garth Cartwright, "I probably signed things away. I was going to sue Bregović but taking him to court in Serbia…what a mess. So I don't bother, I forgive him."[191] Barjamović then contributed three songs to Bregović's next album, *Tales and Songs from Weddings and Funerals.* The continued collaboration illustrates how people from weaker positions, such as the Roma, are often left with little alternative but to allow themselves to be used by stronger more powerful forces such as the non-Romani musician,

[189] Goran Bregović, "Mesečina", from the film, *Underground,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkqFXZxAI28 (accessed March 11, 2019)
[190] Šaban Barjamović, "Djeli Mara," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hjko_jzpfpQ (accessed March 11, 2019)
[191] Garth Cartwright, *Princes Amongst Men: Journeys with Gypsy Musicians,* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2005), 62-63.

Goran Bregović.[192] Such collaborations and Bregović's shaky relationship with "folk" and "world" music can be compared with the "uneven rewards" that Steven Feld discusses, and "how music's forms of local, regional, and social distinction are more and more tensely poised, living the contradictions encountered through embracing and resisting dominant hegemonic trends in the global popular music industry."[193]

Polina Sandler takes a different view of Bregović arguing that Bregović is a cosmopolitan who seeks to preserve a unity within the Balkans, especially in reaction to the wars of the 1990s.[194] Bregović identifies as a Yugoslavian and his use of using folk music was actually fighting against nationalism. The Yugoslavian ideal was to ban songs that reflected the individual nations' ethnic identities and focus on a pan-Yugoslavian identity, yet Bregović, as part of Bijelo Dugme, would sing songs in Albanian (a minority in Yugoslavia) or mix songs together from different ethnicities. The song, "Lijepa Nasa" for example, is a Serbian First World War song together with the Croatian national anthem.[195] Sandler claims that Bregović "elevated every particular nation to the level of the universally shared value…he promoted the value of diversity and multiculturalism within the country without privileging any of the nations."[196] The use of rock music was in opposition to the socialist aesthetic of newly composed folk music, and the focus was more on the brotherhood than the unity rather than the enforced

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[192] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 276.
[193] Steven Feld, "A Sweet Lullaby for World Music," *Public Culture,* 12, no. 1, 2000, 145-171.
[194] Polina Sandler, "Self-Colonization and Self-Orientalization in the Balkans: The Case of Goran Bregović," https://www.academia.edu/34666384/Self-Colonization_and_Self-Orientalization_in_the_Balkans_The_Case_of_Goran_Bregovic?auto=download
[195] Bijelo Dugme, "Lijepa Nasa," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF6EDMGPANM (accessed March 11, 2019)
[196] Polina Sandler, "Self-Colonization and Self-Orientalization in the Balkans: The Case of Goran Bregović," https://www.academia.edu/34666384/Self-Colonization_and_Self-Orientalization_in_the_Balkans_The_Case_of_Goran_Bregovic?auto=download

unity under Tito's regime. One might claim that Bregović's borrowings and arrangements are an integral part of his compositional style.

Sandler also feels the charges of appropriation against Bregović are unfair and that Bregović was surprised that his songs were appropriated by various ethnicities as their own. She references the song, "Djurdjevdan" (St. George's Day) or "Ederlezi", as it is known to the Roma. The song is a universally popular folk song and was another tune that Nenad taught me, and was in oral circulation before Bregović copyrighted it. Many Romani artists have recorded it since, giving credit to Bregović, and it is now back in oral circulation.[197] My aim is neither to condemn or justify Bregović, but to highlight some of the problems that occur when working with folk music.

Bregović celebrates Romani musicians in a Balkanist or Orientalist point of view, depicting them as a more primitive, yet pastoral, race:

> The Roma are those who are the first to suffer in any group; their life is difficult and tragic…But it's really true that the Roma are the cowboys of Europe; it's difficult to adapt to modern times and world views. We'd all like to be Roma at least for one day just so that the rules of gravity don't apply to us, so that our system of values is a little different, a little old-fashioned, not of this world….And as a composer I've always been impressed by the fact that the Roma treat music the same way as they treat nature. They don't understand music as something made up, but rather as something given by God, held in common. With unbelievable ease they take a Spanish harmony and lay a Turkish rhythm and an Arabic melody over it. This is the old, ancient way of making music.[198]

The above passage not only signifies the hybridity of Romani music, but also the way that Bregović allows such hybridity to influence his own style. In his interview with me, Ismail Lumanovski explained how Goran Bregović used the Gypsy stereotype to help brand his image:

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[197] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 277.
[198] Boris Jovanović, "Interview with Goran Bregović," *Max Magazine,* June 29, 2005, No. 123, p. 44, quoted in Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 278.

> It's not about the music, it's about the production, as well. Everyone can play songs, but if you have to know how to produce them, so they can be appealing to the world; you have to know how to advertise them. I'm not saying that his music is good or bad, I'm just saying it has made its way to the top.

Both Bregović's visions of production, branding and arrangements, in addition to the soundtracks to Kusturica's films, have certainly made Romani music more appealing to both a worldwide audience and Balkan audiences who typically would not listen to Romani music. Jane Sugarman writes that Bregović "is making a whole career now of slightly arranged music of the former Yugoslavia, most of it heavily in Rom style, all of which gets packaged in his name. The arrangements do make a difference. Folks in Balkan countries who wouldn't be caught dead listening to a Rom band nevertheless love Bregović's music."[199] Bregović's music may be described to contain a nesting hybridity of different styles of ethnic musics from around the Balkans with western influences, and within that hybridity, there is also the hybrid nature of the Romani music itself.

"Underground Čoček" that appears on the *Underground* soundtrack has become another frequently played and recorded tune by Romani brass bands and their imitators.[200] The version on the *Underground* soundtrack, is performed by the Tzigane Brass Orchestras of Boban Marković and Slobodan Salijević.[201] The form of čoček is ABCD with a central improvised section, called a *taksim,* and a recapitulation of the "head" or ABCD form, but this time in a modified form of ABCDACB. Having three or four continuous sections and a recapitulation is

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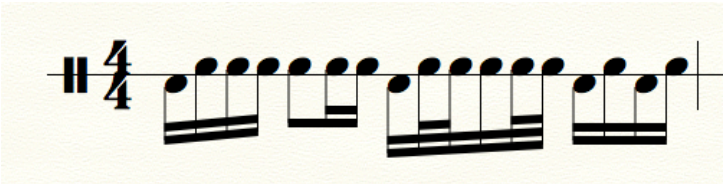
[199] Jane Sugarman, East European Folklife Center listserv posting, May 27, 1998, quoted in Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 277.

[200] It is worth noting that some of the tunes on the *Underground* soundtrack album do not actually appear in the film. For example, Bregović adds his own words to "Kalishnikov". Nevertheless, tunes such as "Underground Čoček" have gained widespread popularity. A search on YouTube will lead to a variety of versions of this tune from Detroit marching bands to this version by this Japanese band, JapaLkan, in traditional Balkan dress, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZRfyUR77j8 (accessed March 11, 2019)

[201] Tzigane Brass Orchestras of Boban Marković and Slobodan Salijević, "Underground Čoček," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qKB_QURVL0 (accessed March 23, 2019).

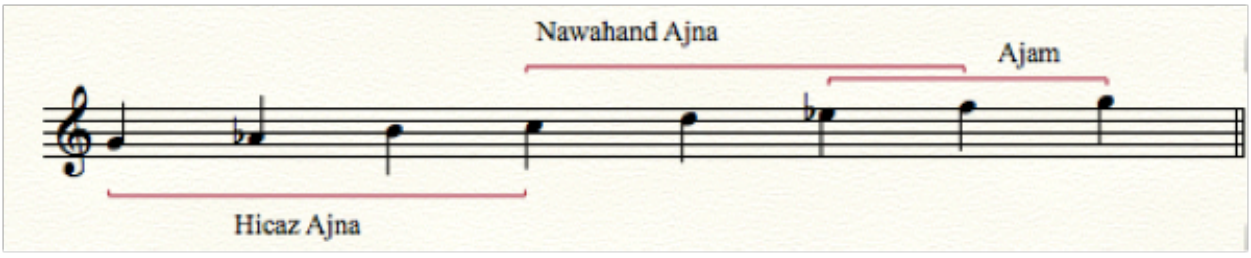
common to Romani music. The *taksim* is also a common feature of Romani music and allows the soloist not only a chance to display his virtuosity, but also his expressiveness.[202] The *taksim* is also common to Turkish classical music and again shows the Ottoman influence on Romani music. The rhythm is a common čoček rhythm. The basic style can be scored as in figure 16, although the rhythm has subtle variations throughout the piece.

Figure 16. Čoček rhythm



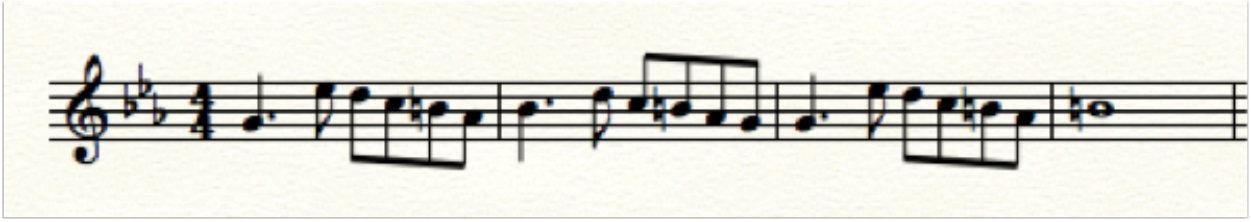
The tonal center is a concert F and based on the Hijaz Hümayun makam,[203] which includes the minor second between the first and second degrees and the prominence of the augmented second between the second and third degrees, making the music sound distinctly oriental. The melody pivots between the concert F and concert A as shown in figures 17 and 18. Please note that as in the example in Chapter 2, the notation is for trumpet in B-flat and therefore everything notated sounds a tone lower than written.

Figure 17. Hijaz Hümayun



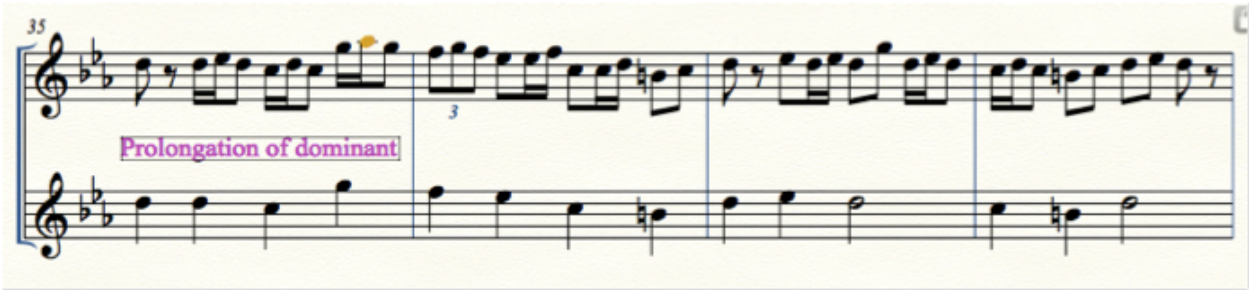
[202] I use the male pronoun here, as Romani instrumental musicians are almost exclusively male.
[203] Murat Aydemir, *Turkish Music Makam Guide,* edited and translated by Erman Dirikcan, (Istanbul: Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency, 2010), 158-159.

Figure 18. “Underground Čoček” A section



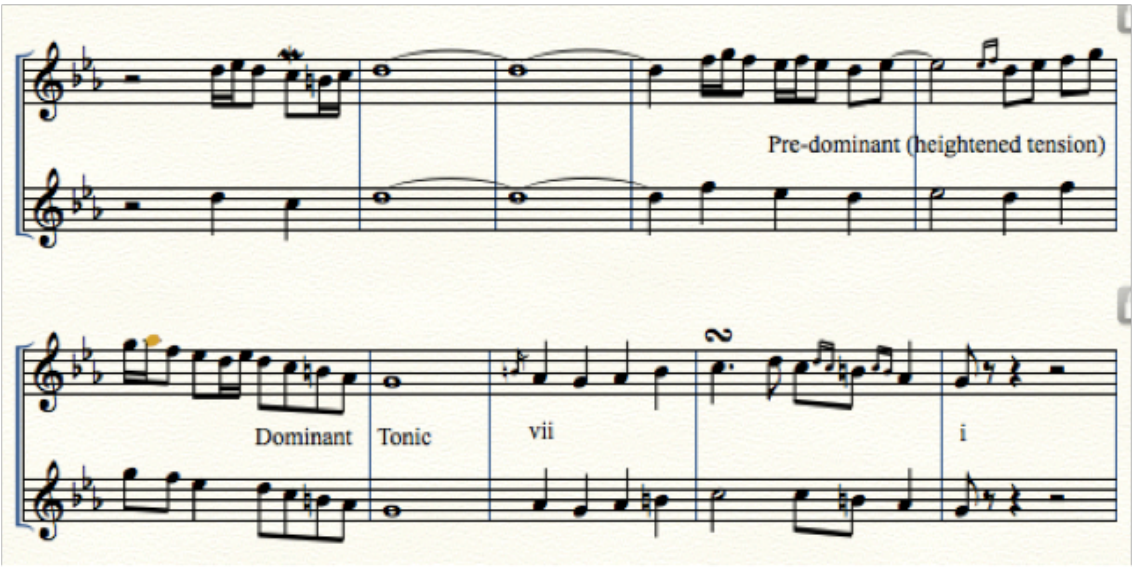
During the *taksim,* the soloist plays a two sixteenth note-eighth note figure that is idiomatic in many of the solos I have heard from Romani trumpet players. Throughout the first phrase, the soloist prolongs the dominant, a concert C, as he extemporizes around that pitch as shown in figure 19.

Figure 19. Taksim - First Phrase



In the second phrase, tension is heightened as the soloist improvises around a concert D-flat, a pre-dominant tonality, moving to the dominant, a concert C, and finally resolving to the tonic, a concert F as shown in figure 20.

Figure 20. Taksim – Second Phrase



It seems artificial, or in some way an imposition of western terms, to attempt to describe this improvisation in terms of Western tonality; that is not my intention. I am placing my analysis from a perspective of a Western, classically trained musician, attempting to theorize how emotional tension is created during the solo. Like many improvisers, I presume that the soloist does not think in terms of dominant or tonic, or hijaz makam, but just plays through the aural experience of learning to improvise and growing up playing the music. Likewise, I recall attending a masterclass given by the jazz trumpeter, Wynton Marsalis. Someone asked him what he was thinking of when he improvised. He stated emphatically that he was not thinking of the chord changes, but of the music. Not that he did not already have the chord changes ingrained within him through the years of experience playing and listening to jazz; his skill at improvising meant that solos came naturally to him.

When I asked Stefan about how he learned music, he told me that he learned from playing off recordings. He would initially learn to play the tunes and copy the improvisations and

then would make up his improvisations from what he was hearing.[204] Technology has aided this process with recordings being more widely available through the Internet and the ability to slow recordings down without altering the pitch. Stefan told me that he had computer software that enabled him to slow down the recordings. Ismail Lumanowski went into some detail with me about his knowledge of makams, but he clarified that most Romani musicians do not study makams: "They don't study makams, that's why they don't play them right. They play them in their way, which makes another genre of music. So that's what happens. The way in which copying becomes something else."[205]

As Balkan nations exploit their "otherness" and stereotypes, within that sphere, Romani do the same. With Romani music sounding more oriental, the music sounds even more different from that of Western Europe, thus more exotic or primitive to western ears. Even within Serbia, Serbians would take pride in the music that the Romani musicians produced and as Johann, the youth hostel worker, told me; "we [Serbians] adopted it as our own." Nikola, on the other hand, had a different view of Romani music. He had grown up in Vranje, where his parents still lived, but had studied in Graz, Austria, lived in Belgrade and had plans to marry his Chinese girlfriend and live in China. He was glad to get out of Vranje and did not have much interest in Romani music. Romani musicians have learned that self-exoticization can be an effective marketing strategy. Alexander Marković in his ethnomusicological research in Vranje wrote how one brass musician had forbidden band members to shave for several days prior to a photograph shoot, so that they look more "Gypsy".[206]

[204] Interview between Matthew Kay and Stefan Mladenović, August 30th 2015.
[205] Interview between Matthew Kay and Ismail Lumanovski, January 13th 2017.
[206] Alexander Marković, "'So That We Look More Gypsy': Strategic Performances and Ambivalent Discourses of Romani Brass for the World Music Scene," *Ethnomusicology Forum,* 24, no. 2, 2015, 270.

The hybridity of Roma and their cultural identity and musical style is a complex issue. It is much more than a mix of an eastern influence and the country in which they live. Romani musicians are continually changing their styles and identities to match their circumstances. Arguably, the only Romani brass band that can compete with Boban and Marko Marković in terms of international fame are Fanfare Ciocărlia. Like Boban and Marko Marković, they are a global phenomenon who tour internationally, and were even hired by Danny Elfman and brought to the United States for a birthday party.[207] Quite often, however, both bands will depict themselves as rural primitive people. In the trailer promoting a collaboration between both bands to tour Europe together, as a Balkan Brass Battle, there is a bizarre combination of the Wild West and gypsy peasantry depicted. The trailer opens as a silent movie with bullet shots on the screen while a gypsy brass band version of "Born to be Wild" is played. The trailer follows a series of taunts from Fanfare Ciocărlia towards Marko Marković challenging him to a face-off, a brass band battle. Fanfare Ciocărlia, are pictured in their village, Zece Prăjini, in a small local bar, fields, cattle pens, together with goats, roosters, horse drawn carts with broken wheels, and a battered old Mercedes. Marko Marković, dressed in a cowboy hat, responds to the taunts, which are in the form of notes and posters, by playing his trumpet at the posters.

There is a lot of truth to Fanfare Ciocărlia's depiction of themselves: Zece Prăjini is a rural village of about 400 inhabitants in the east of Romania. Henry Ernst, a German sound engineer, was traveling across Romania in search of traditional village musicians and a farmer suggested that he go to Zece Prăjini. It was there that he discovered a Roma community where 80 out of the 400 inhabitants were musicians and assembled a brass band. He took the band on tour at a huge personal financial loss, but shortly after the tour, a German radio station called

[207] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 254.

them up asking for a band for their world music festival.[208] From there, Fanfare Ciocărlia rose to fame with several albums, sell-out tours, and were winners of the BBC Radio 3 Music Award in 2006.

While Zece Prăjini is a rural village, the band is marketed in such a way to exaggerate a sense of primitivism. I doubt the musicians sit in a cattle pen watching television or find roosters nesting in their drums. Therefore, like most commercial musicians, Roma will sometimes assume whatever identity will give their music a brand or image, even if it means reinforcing a negative stereotype.[209]

It seems that when Romani music is marketed towards a western audience, more rural scenes are employed, but when it is marketed towards Roma, more urban scenes of nightclubs, beautiful women, and flashy cars are used. The video, "America Kyuchek" by Bulgarian Romani clarinet player, Sali Okka, features Okka playing the clarinet in a nightclub surrounded by women belly dancing. During the video, it shows a man arriving by helicopter and driving off in an expensive looking Mercedes, again, surrounded by women.[210] Many of these videos follow the same theme of urban and lavishly ostentatious living.

Similarly, the Boban and Marković song, "Sljivovica" features the two trumpet stars singing and playing around a pool party. During the video there is a mix of the local and the cosmopolitan. The Serbian and Romani references are obviously the music played by the brass band with Boban on accordion (another popular Serbian instrument), a pig roasting over hot coals, and the customary belly dancers. During the video Marko points to his traditional Serbian

[208] Asphalt Tango Records, Press Release, http://www.asphalt-tango.de/fanfare/pdf/press_release_fanfare_Ciocărlia.pdf (accessed February 21, 2019).
[209] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 264-266.
[210] Sali Okka, "Amerika Kyucheck," 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYk2MbQwkQM (accessed February 21, 2019).

shoes. While in the swimming pool, he extravagantly pours Sljivovica, a traditional plum brandy, over himself. The more cosmopolitan references are, again the expensive looking Mercedes, where the camera zooms in on the wheel hub displaying the logo, and the New York Yankees belt buckle that Marko wears. During the song, Marko also raps about the brandy. Hip-hop, like other African-American genres, such as jazz and blues, is a common style that Romani people adopt. Carol Silverman makes the connection that rap links Roma with African-Americans, two groups who have faced slavery and persecution in the past and how rap can reinforce an urban ghetto stereotype.

Just as Roma identified with African-Americans in the 1970s, when it became more well known that Roma probably originated in India, Serbian and Macedonian musicians also began to identify with their Indian past, in a similar way African-American musicians, such as Art Blakey, identified with their African roots.[211] "Balkan Bollywood" by the New York Gypsy All-Stars, of which Ismail Lumanovski is a member, is one such example.[212] The music draws on Indian, Eastern European, and jazz-funk idioms. The instrumentation is just as diverse. The most distinctive sound is the kanun, a traditional Turkish instrument, with clarinet, synthesizer, electric bass, and drum set.

Further hybridity of style may be seen again with Denorecords, and Denis Seliov's collaboration with Canadian-Indian singer, Sunny Brown, for the song "Punjabi".[213] The song is sung in Hindi, and has a typical Bhangra feel, another genre of music that arose out of

[211] Art Blakey's albums, "Holiday for Skins Volumes 1 and 2", come to mind with African-style percussion and chanting.
[212] New York Gypsy All-Stars, "Balkan Bollywood," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDGHB9Lz7v0 (accessed March 17, 2017).
[213] Denorecords and Sunny Brown, "Punjabi," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFTWXaOobJk (accessed March 17, 2017).

oppression and racism towards northern Indians and Pakistanis in Britain.[214] Throughout the music and video, there is a cross-cultural mix of old and new, including the traditional distinctive rhythms of the dhol (wooden barreled drums), modern synthesized beats and loops, hip-hop influences and break dancing, modern and traditional Indian costumes, and towards the end of the video, Denis Saliov places a Roma flag over the Indian flag pointing towards his people's origin.[215]

Much of Romani brass band music features Latin, and jazz influences. These influences could be partly due to the similarity of instrumentation between both genres. I recall several conversations with the musicians from Nenad's band about various brass and jazz players. Martin, Stefan's younger brother, asked me if I had heard of the classical trumpet soloist, Tine Thing Helseth, which I had. He then asked if I had heard of the euphonium player, David Childs, and I told him that I had played in the same band as him on occasion. They also showed me videos of big bands and marveled at the high note playing. Romani musicians have a respect for other musicians, especially those of their own instrumental family, and will absorb the various influences. Jazz licks and idioms frequently occur in the soloist improvisations. For example, in Marko Marković's solo on "The James Bond Theme"[216], Marković uses a chromatic "side-stepping" pattern shown in figure 21 that is common among jazz soloists.

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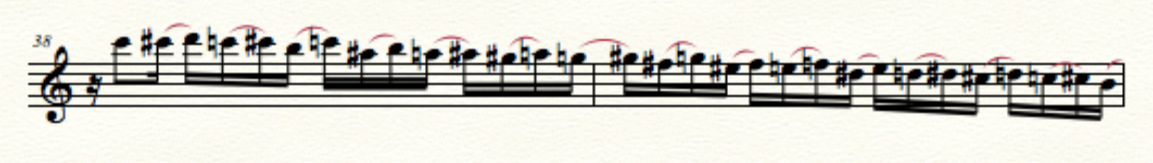
[214] Falu Pravin Bakrania, *Bhangra and Asian Underground: South Asian music and the politics of belonging in Britain,* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 1-29. Although the movement of South Asians to Britain after the Second World War was voluntarily, Bakrania still considers the status of second generation South Asians as diasporic. Today's generation of South Asians do not belong to the land of their parents, but through cultural differences and lack of acceptance from white British, they struggle to find belonging in their birthplace.

[215] Denorecords and Sunny Brown, "Punjabi," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFTWXaOobJk (accessed March 17, 2017)

[216] Fanfare Ciocărlia and Boban and Marko Marković Orchestra, "The James Bond Theme," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V971qpU8Whw (accessed March 19 2019).

Figure 21. Chromatic "side-stepping"



On the Džambo Aguševi Orchestra's 2016 album, *Brass Like it Hot,* many of the tunes are Latin inspired such as "I Love You, Mexico", "Arriba", and "Ajmo".[217] The main hook in "Ajmo" at the beginning of the tune is the same as "Armando's Rhumba", a tune by Chick Corea from his 1976 album, *My Spanish Heart.*[218] After the main hook, the music continues in a more Balkan style of music. There a various reasons why this song is so suited to the Romani brass band. The čoček rhythms sound remarkably similar to Latin rhythms. The original by Chick Corea is flamenco-inspired with a steady four beat on the kick drum, and hand clapping. Flamenco connects the Roma of the Balkans with the Andalusian Roma Gypsies of southern Spain.[219] Although the music is different, much of spirit of soul, virtuosity, and rhythm connects the two genres. The Džambo Aguševi Orchestra is from the small Macedonian city of Strumica. On the official band website it explains how various genres influenced Aguševi's music:

> While he was deeply rooted in the brass band genre of the southern Balkans, young Džambo kept his ears open and listened to music from both West and East – appropriate for a Macedonian youth, the former Yugoslav republic historically being a meeting point (and melting pot) for Ottoman and Orthodox cultures. Džambo listened to Jazz and Turkish, Funk and Soul music, movie soundtracks and classical, all the time using his Gypsy heritage as the roots from which he developed his own distinctive trumpet style and sound.[220]

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[217] Džambo Aguševi Orchestra, "Ajme," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ2vBza8lc0 (accessed March 16, 2019).
[218] Chick Corea, "Armando's Rhumba," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ObP4k1ZbvY (accessed March 19, 2019).
[219] Ninotchka Devorah Bennaum, "Flamenco Music and Dance," *Encyclopædia Britannica,* entry last updated January 21, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/art/flamenco (accessed March 19, 2019).
[220] Džambo Aguševi Orchestra Official Website, "Bio", https://dzamboaguseviorchestra.com/bio/ (accessed March 16, 2019).

The above statement highlights how the Romani brass bands bridge gaps on many levels: East and West, local and global, urban and rural. Also, much of the same can be said about other Romani music. It is the brass band, however, that seems to have the versatility to adapt to the different genres, and play in a variety of settings, indoor or outdoor, without the need for electric amplification.

Conclusion. Diplomacy and Friendship

26 August 2015

I was still wrangling with the travel insurance company to rearrange my flights to ensure that I could stay longer in Vranje. I had provided them with numerous medical documents stating that it was unsafe for me to fly so soon after surgery, and a letter from an attorney stating that they needed to abide to the terms laid out in the policy, but they were still putting up resistance and not returning my calls. Our flight was due to leave late that night and I should have been making arrangements to get to Belgrade that morning. I made the decision to remain in Vranje, miss our flights, and continue to fight with the insurance company, despite the struggle I would have in paying out of pocket for an extra set of flights.

Staying in Vranje enabled us to attend a festival in Vranje that evening held in memory of the great Romani trumpet player, Bakija Bakić. It is difficult for me to say whether it was my health or going to the festival that was the deciding factor in me staying in Vranje, but I am glad I stayed. All the best Romani bands from the area came to play at the festival. It was several hours of Romani funk and soul that lasted late into the night. All the bands sounded good and Mirko knew who most of them were and would tell me their names. Several of them had won at Guča at some point. Some of the bands would also have their young sons on stage playing trumpet with them.

The finale of the festival was by Bakija Bakić, Nenad's band. They opened their set with a "Izgubljeno Jagnje", a quiet, traditional and reflective piece.[221] In his interview, Nenad told me it was an important trademark of the band to be able to play quietly at times, and from the soul:

> Everything is important to us: sound, technique, and rhythm. We have to adapt our playing to the event. If we are playing inside, we have to play slowly and quietly. If it is outside then it is louder. The first trumpet is to make everyone feel very nice and well, and that's why we pay so much attention the sound. We play from our souls and that's the most important part. Bakija Bakic played like this. Other bands tend to play loud and to make the impression with this loudness. We want to make the impression on the listener by playing from our soul.[222]

The program of music gradually built in dynamics and intensity and included more contemporary dance tunes such as the hit by Macedonian Romani singer, Esma Redžepova, "Caje Sukarije" and the Michael Jackson hit, "Billie Jean". From watching the video, it can be seen the size of the crowd watching and that young and old alike are listening and watching the concert.

During the festival, I saw the mayor, Zoran Antić. He greeted me warmly and said that he would like to have a reception for me at the City Hall. The reception was eventually arranged through Mirko. I had no idea what to expect and the details were difficult to determine. The night before the reception we were with Nenad's family and I was facing the dilemma of mentioning the reception to Nenad. What if Nenad had not been invited? That could cause a problem in the community or cause him to resent me. I decided not to say anything. The next day I went to the City Hall and was taken to a large conference room to wait. Shortly after, Nenad arrived. He looked at me and asked why I did not mention that I would be here last night when I was with

[221] Video of "In Memoriam Bakija Bakić" festival, August 26th, 2015. https://youtu.be/_bUJ_f9wpKY (accessed March 19, 2019).
[222] Interview between Matthew Kay and Nenad Mladenović, August 24th 2015.

him. I told him that I did not understand what was happening, which was a fair and honest summation of how I felt. The mayor and several other people entered the room along with photographers and a television crew.

Much of the reception was in Serbian, but I gathered that they were pleased that I had chosen Vranje to study the music. Mayor Antić asked me what I liked about Vranje. I told him that I enjoyed the music and the food, especially gurmanska, a grilled pork and cheese dish popular in Vranje, but most of all, the people who had shown such warm hospitality to me during my stay. Mayor Antić clearly liked my answer. He told me that Vranje was diverse and accepting of all ethnicities and the Vranje was the first city in the world to have a statue of a Rom, Bakija Bakić. Mayor Antić presented me with gifts of local pottery, a book on Serbia, and a bottle of rakija in the shape of a trumpet. He told me that he would hope that I would return to Vranje. I should write a letter and they will assist me in anyway they can with my research and they will arrange a concert with Nenad and me.[223]

Mayor Antić's political party is the Socialist Party of Serbia, the political party founded by Slobodan Milosević during the break up of Yugoslavia. The mayor's attitude is similar to many of the experiences and interactions that I had with Serbians during my stay: a desire to remove any negative sentiments left over from the war, and that they are open and welcoming. Although Mayor Antić never mentioned the NATO bombings, it was clear from the other experiences that I had with Mirko and his family, Nenad's family, Ivica the policeman, the doctor in Belgrade, that they all wanted to help me and show hospitality, but they also wanted me to be aware of how much the NATO bombings hurt them and their country. I never thought that my visit would turn into a diplomatic event, but it is clear from the reception that was what it

[223] The news coverage of the reception can be seen on this YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3P7PDw-KCLE (accessed March 18, 2019)

was: to welcome someone from the West and a genuine effort to forgive past hurts with a view to changing the Balkanized, Westerner's opinion of Serbians. I remember similar attitudes growing up in Britain where there always seemed to be an anti-German sentiment due to the Second World War.[224] Whenever I met Germans in Britain, or I travelled over to Germany, there was usually a mutual effort of hospitality and helpfulness on both sides in an attempt to move on from the past.

I intend to take Mayor Antić up on his offer to come back to Vranje to further my research, and hopefully write a book on the Romani brass band, as there is no comprehensive book written at the time of writing as far as I am aware. Although Nenad, Miša, and Stefan told me about the band's role in weddings and showed me videos, I need to see that for myself. Now that I have contacts and relationships in Vranje, I am sure that it will be easier to continue my research there and gain more of an insight into their lives as Romani musicians.

I also told Nenad that I would look into the possibility of their band coming to tour the United States. I have already made some contacts with people who know more than I do about what is involved, but I still find the prospect of arranging a tour daunting. The process in arranging such a tour would add further material to my research and be of value to the field of ethnomusicology. In addition to researching Romani brass bands in the Balkans, I intend to continue to examine their influence beyond the Balkans. The popularity of Romani brass band music has spread throughout Europe, both in relatively "pure" forms such as Fanfare Ciocărlia, and hybrid forms through DJs such as Shantel.[225] I witnessed that Romani brass bands are also

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[224] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLDOTr_eQY8 (accessed March 21, 2015). This video shows the British marketing campaign for Spitfire Beer in England that took place from 1997 to 2005 and shows how Britain still likes to poke fun at the Germans.

[225] Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 280-289.

popular among my Lebanese friends and a Lebanese music producer, Michel Elefteriades, assembled a group of Romani brass musicians to play in his nightclub in Beirut under the name of the Yugoslav Gipsy Brass Band.

Throughout my research I continually question myself regarding the value of what I am doing. What is the point of my research and does it make any difference to the world? I believe that what I am doing does make a difference and helps us understand the power of music to bring people together and break down barriers. Thomas Turino emphasizes that, "musical participation and experience are valuable for the process of personal and social integration that make us whole."[226] In Serbia, the brass band is a staple at weddings, arguably the most important ceremony in Serbian culture. Through weddings, two people and two families are united and the music plays a central role as people hold hands and dance in either lines or circles. Through the Guča Trumpet Festival, the film, *Underground,* and internationally famous brass bands such as Fanfare Ciocărlia and Boban and Marko Marković, brass bands have made Serbia a more attractive place to visit, where people can dance and party to music rooted in Balkan tradition. It is ironic, that it takes music from a marginalized group to promote Serbian identity. The hybridity of such music, the use of tunes from popular western culture, jazz, Latin, together with the oriental influences, so disparaged by communist and nationalist regimes, has helped form a Serbian identity of joy and celebration. As I further my research in this field, I will continue to search and question the deeper meaning and value of music to an individual's soul, identity, and society as a whole. John Miller Chernoff, in his book, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility,* writes how his experiences in the field shaped his perspective and how he reached an "aesthetic appreciation" that refers "to a style of living and sensibility toward life, revealing cultural

[226] Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1.

patterns, ethical modes, and standards of judgment."[227] Such attitudes can be seen with the popularity of brass bands in Vranje where tradition, modernity, and cultural identity can be celebrated in the same musical performance.

Cooley and Barz discuss how fieldwork has changed over the years and how "Music is our path toward people, and if anything distinguishes contemporary ethnomusicology from previous eras of the discipline, it is our practice of talking with, playing music with, experiencing life with the people about whose musical practices we write…fieldwork is experience, and the experience of people making music is at the core of ethnomusicological method and theory."[228] Bringing my wife and children with me to Serbia was fundamental to my success in building relationships and being able to undertake my research. They were as much as part of the fieldwork as I was and share in the contribution. In an age where having children can sometimes be perceived as a barrier to a fulfilling career, certainly in Serbia I found the opposite to be true. Naturally, there are limitations to conducting fieldwork with a family; I cannot spend twelve months at a time in a foreign country. Even writing a paper can prove a challenge with the seemingly never-ending work that goes along with raising children. That said, meeting the Mladenović family positioned me not only as a researcher and a trumpet player, but a husband and a father, just like Nenad, with similar family values. I am not aware of other ethnomusicologists who have involved their family in their fieldwork, but it can enrich the experience of everyone involved and help foster those relationships that are so important.

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[227] John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 4.

[228] Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory Barz, "Casting Shadows: Fieldwork Is Dead! Long Live Fieldwork!" in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 14.

I know that I was not the first person to undertake fieldwork in Vranje. I had spoken with a friend and colleague, Alexander Marković, who had spent several months on a couple of occasions researching music and dance in Vranje, prior to me going. The sight of our family with four small children drew positive attention to us. Fears of me being a spy were alleviated and helped to dissipate any animosity that may have been harbored towards me from the NATO bombings. After the reception at the City Hall, the local television station asked if our family could come into the studio with Nenad to be interviewed.

Two days later we went to the local television station. Just as I was preparing our children with a combination of bribes and threats to behave, the presenter intervened with, "It's okay; they're children." Within a couple of minutes of the interview our children were bored and sought other ways to entertain themselves including singing, trying to play my trumpet, and blowing down the microphones.[229] Alyn and I were distracted by our children's behavior and it was a challenge to concentrate on the questions during the interview. After the interview we felt embarrassed by our children's behavior. For the remainder of our stay however, people would come out of stores or stop us in the street to tell us that they saw us on television. In hindsight, the children stole the focus of the television interview, but it did more good than harm and endeared the people of Vranje to our children and us.

Towards the end of our stay, we invited Nenad and his family for dinner. Mirko and Ana insisted on preparing food. Also, probably through Mirko, the national television station was coming to interview Nenad and me. Nenad seemed to be no stranger to television interviews and was relaxed. The television crew filmed Nenad and me playing "Ederlezi" and Stefan and me

[229] The full interview is on this YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=55&v=Z_IekUeIlHo, (accessed March 18, 2019)

playing "Kalishnikov".[230] Antonia, Nenad's daughter, remarked to Alyn that my trumpet playing now sounds gypsy, a great compliment, being around the musicians and hearing the music constantly was helping me stylistically. Nenad and his family had brought gifts for our family: toys for the children, and a pitcher and wooden canteen for Alyn and me.

It was a beautiful evening. Miša showed me Fabijan and Jovanka's wedding video on YouTube,[231] while Mirko and Nenad talked. The next day, Nenad's wife and mother came to pick figs from Mirko's trees and in the evening Nenad repaid the gesture and invited us, and Mirko and Ana to their home for dinner. It was again another special night with friends who do not normally mix, being brought together. Reflecting upon my experience in Serbia, I acknowledge how difficult it is to separate research from friendships. First relationships must be built, and then there is an expectation to write objectively. Although historically Serbia has had its fair share of wars and problems, I am grateful to my Serbian friends who made it possible for me to tell their stories and mine, and hopefully provide an objective insight into Serbian culture and music and how it is perceived from both outside and inside the country.

[230] RTS, "Ovo Je Srbija 03 09 2015," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iR2f3vnZ0bQ (accessed March 18, 2018)
[231] Jovanka is Miša's daughter, Fabijan is the drummer in the band.

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