



The music of the Roma in Hungary

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Traditionally there are two kinds of music performed by the Roma: one is musical service rendered for non-Romani audiences, the other is music made within the Romani community. The music played for outsiders is labelled "Gypsy music" by Hungarian scientific literature having adopted its colloquial name, and the music they use among themselves is called "folk music". At the same time, the Roma began gradually to develop an ethnic music culture from the 1970s. The process of creating the institutional conditions for the practising, improvement and presentation of their own culture picked up momentum when after the great political turn they obtained national minority status. In the following, I first give a sketchy summary of the two traditional cultural modes, before listing the main tendencies asserted in today's Romani music life in Hungary. The table below shows the Romani ethnic groups in Hungary and their traditional occupations (after Kemény 1974).

The major ethnic groupings of the Roma living in Hungary			
The name of the grouping (in brackets their own name)	First language	Proportion according to their first language within the Romani population, in %	Traditional occupations
Hungarian (romungro)	Hungarian	ca 71	music making in musician dynasties, metal-working, brick-making, agricultural labour etc.
Vlach (vlašiko)	Romani- Hungarian	ca 21	metal-working, sieve-making, horse-dealing, trading etc.
Boyash (băiaş)	Romanian- Hungarian	ca 8	wood-working (tubs, spoons, other wooden household utensils)
Slovak (serviko)	Romani- Hungarian	No data. (A few hundred people.)	agricultural labour
Vend [=Slovenian], (Vendiko)	Romani- Hungarian	No data. (A few hundred people.)	whetting, music-making
German (Sinto)	Romani- Hungarian	No data. (A few hundred people.)	music-making

Musical service

The international term "Gypsy music" comes from Ferenc Liszt. In his book published in French in Paris in 1859 and two years later in Hungarian in Pest – "On Gypsies and Gypsy music in Hungary" (Liszt 1959, 1861) – he called the music played by professional Romani performers "Gypsy music". During the time that passed since a wide variety of primarily folkish musics came under the heading of "Gypsy music" ranging from Russian Gypsy romance (Shcherbakova 1984: 23) to the Romani versions of Spanish flamenco (Washabaugh 1996).



Though there were mentions made of Romani musicians in Hungary in 1489 and then in 1525, both in books of accounts of princes, the occupation did not become widespread among Roma before the latter half of the 18th century.¹ Two famous musicians of the 18th century were Mihály Barna and Panna Cinka (?-1772). The four-member band of the latter consisted of two violins (lead: → *prím* and *kontra*), a → *cimbalom* and a double-bass. The composition of a typical "Gypsy band" including the former foursome and a clarinet later was patterned upon the serenade bands of Vienna.

The mushrooming of Gypsy bands in the last decades of the 18th century was triggered off by the Hungarian nationalist movement. The nationalist movement encompassed the whole of culture including neology, music, dance and costumes. The first phase of the emergence of national music lasting for some 50-60 years and its style was later named *verbunkos* after the German word for recruitment, "Werbung". It started with arrangements for the piano and original compositions published usually under the title "Hungarian dances", in German or French translations (e.g. "Ungarische Nazionaltänze" or "Hongroises"). The four best known composers and virtuosic violinists of the period were Antal Csermák (1774-1822), János Lavotta (1764-1820), → János Bihari (1764-1827) and Márk Rózsavölgyi (1789-1848). Of them, Bihari of Romani origin enjoyed greatest popularity (Sárosi 1996).

Patronised by aristocrats, some of the musicians were trained in Vienna and thus had a taste of European musical culture. It was schooling that promoted the development of the distinguishing feature of Hungarian "Gypsy music" marking it off from its Balkanian counterpart – harmonisation – by the mid-19th century. The Romani musicians of the time did not borrow exactly the harmonic construction of contemporaneous Viennese classicism, but they learnt much from it. That was one secret of the West European success of Hungarian "Gypsy music". This music was somewhat exotic but not so much as to remain unintelligible for a willing public. A contributory factor to success was the tradition of playing without scores. That fed the myth of "the natural genius grown on the Hungarian soil". It further enhanced the popularity of Romani musicians that they could extemporise and adapt themselves to the needs of any given audience.

The best Romani musicians of the early 19th century won overall recognition and became the representatives of national music, but they earned full glory through the crushed war of independence of 1848. Their music, the public performance of which was banned, became the symbol of desired freedom. The music itself underwent some change. While in the first half of the century Roma were musicians in the service of squires, in the new world of embourgeoisement they had to make their own living by satisfying a far more diverse stock of demands. A new genre evolved by around the middle of the century, the "Magyar nóta" or "Hungarian song", which was later called "popular art song". The noted composers of the age wished to be in line with the current West European musical style, trying to create the equivalent of romantic German "Lied" by expanding the folksong form and adopting some elements of West European composed music. Unlike in the heyday of the *verbunkos* which was characterised by many songs with texts becoming instrumental tunes, now it was the other way round: words were added to tunes written for instruments. This genre of increasing popularity was also performed by Romani musicians, hence the term "Gypsy music" was also conferred upon it. This held true even when a special subcategory – mostly composed "Gypsy songs" – evolved later. The attempt to rise to West European art music standards was, however, unsuccessful since the decisive majority of composers were amateurs (belonging to the social stratum of white-collar workers). The most famous Romani song composer of the 19th century was Pista Dankó (1858-1903).

¹ For a more detailed account of Gypsy music in Hungary, see Sárosi 1978, 1999, 2001, which I largely rely on for my summary.



In addition to native genres, some internationally known pieces were also included in the repertoires of Gypsy bands from the second half of the 19th century. From the early 20th century entertainment music in restaurants naturally included operetta and operatic arias as well as popular Hungarian and international songs. The main genre, "Magyar nóta", also underwent major changes. While in its so-called classic period lasting until about the turn of the century the main aim of the best "nóta" composers was colourful diversity, the songs composed at the beginning of the century were highly homogeneous in style.

Gypsy music was altered again after World War II. This change will be touched on in the chapter on the emergence of ethnic musical culture.

While "Gypsy music" was typically born as part of urban culture and only shifted to the provinces from the first half of the 20th century, gradually squeezing out the (Hungarian) folk music repertory and taking its place, the instrumental music of peasant communities was, and in some of the neighbouring countries (Slovakia, Romania, Serbia-Montenegro) is also traditionally mainly performed by Roma. It is also to be noted that non-musician Roma also render some musical and other cultural services to the surrounding population. In north-eastern Hungary the Roma go from house to house to say Christmas greetings (Martin 1980), and it is severally recorded that the peasants asked them to perform their own ballads and tales for money. For both urban and rural Roma, the culture they performed became incorporated in their own culture or at least it influenced the culture that the Roma did not perform publicly.

Music of the Romani communities

The music of the Romani communities in Hungary can be studied best by the three main language groups. The musics of → Hungarian and → Vlach Roma share a lot in common, while the music of the *Boyashes* widely differs from theirs. What is common to all three groups is that their musics are almost entirely vocal, without traditional instrumental accompaniment², and that they are still alive, even though in some places, mostly in urban settings, they are not part of the everyday life.

The two main genres of "Hungarian Vlach Romani music" are the slow lyrical song and the dance song. The slow songs are called in Hungarian → hallgató nóta "song for listening" (in Romani: *loki djili* – "slow song" or *mesaljaki djili* – "table song") or "szomorú nóta" – "sad song"; *Romungros* in north-eastern Hungary call it "árva nóta" – "orphan's song". The Hungarian name of the dance songs is "pattogós" – "snapping" or "pergetős" – "spinning" "nóta" (in Romani: *khelimaski djili* – "dance song", *xuttjadi djili* – "leaping song"). The Hungarian speaking *Romungros* sing a lot of Romani words in their song texts. That means that they use Romani elements in the Hungarian grammatical framework (Matras ed. 1998) in the ritualised register (Kovalcsik and Kubínyi 2002a). (This phenomenon is classified as Para-Romani — in our case as Hungaro-Romani).

The *Boyashes* living mainly in Transdanubia call some of the slow parlando songs "hallgatós nóta" – "song for listening", but they use several other names in their language, e.g.: *cînt'ic dă jal'e* – "sad song", *cînt'ic hăl prost* – "modest song", *cînt'ic hăl trist* – "sorrowful song", *cînt'ic dă năcăjală* – "tearful song", etc. The dance songs are called *cînt'ic dă joc* – "dance song". While, however, in the first two groups the genre names usually refer to similar styles, among the *Boyashes* they may designate

² Except for the mostly Romungro communities whose musicians also play or accompany songs among themselves, too. In a few *Boyash* communities there may also be an instrumentalist who does not perform publicly but accompanies the singing of relatives at meetings.



widely different tunes: the tunes of diverse origin are not brought into a strongly coherent group by the common performing style. The various layers of *Boyash* folk music can thus be easily separated. They have few tunes in common with the other two main Roma groups (Kovalcsik 1996).

"Slow songs" are the vehicles of folk poetry. The *Hungarian* and *Vlach Roma* usually sing six- or eight-syllabic lines, four lines making up a strophe. The tempo is *parlando-rubato*. The scales are mainly diatonic (heptatonic) major or minor scales with a minor seventh in the upper register ("ta" in place of "ti", "so" instead of "si") and the major seventh in the lower registers ("ti" and "si"). A peculiar feature of performance is the long suspension of the penultimate note of the strophe (which is usually the second degree: "re" or "ti"), before the step down to the keynote ("do" or "la") or the lower leading note ("ti" or "si") via repeating the vowel of the sustained syllable after a pause of varying length, and then stepping down to the final note. The last two notes are usually sung softly, or sometimes omitted. (For this peculiarity of the slow song in more detail, see, e.g., Sárosi 1978: 25-26). The omission of the closing note is especially typical along the north-eastern border.

The traditional structure of the tunes is descending. They often begin around the octave (upper do or la) but today the number of these tunes is decreasing. In the past decades the new melody ideal has evolved gradually through the octave break. As a result, the strophe begins low and traces an ascending or domed outline (Kovalcsik 1985).

Slow songs are traditionally homophonic performed heterophonically in groups. When a tune is sung collectively, two roles are asserted: that of the "leader" and that of the "accompaniers" or "helpers". The leader begins the strophes alone, setting the tune, tempo and text, and the rest join in around the middle of the first line. Under the rules of heterophony, everyone may sing their own tune variants (Kovalcsik 1981, Kertész Wilkinson 1997). In the northern and north-eastern counties, however, a rich and diverse polyphony began to evolve in *Romungro* and *Vlach Roma* communities from the 1950s. That means that one or more singers sustain the line-ending note long and sonorously, while the rest sing ornaments in support of the line-ending note and/or its lower or upper third (Kovalcsik 1981, Kovalcsik and Kubínyi 2002).

"Dance songs" serve to accompany dances. They are in duple time, the text lines are seven- or eight-syllabic but they may acquire three syllables at the middle and end of the tune, e.g. 8, 8+3, 8, 8+3, or the number of lines may increase, e.g. to six: 8, 8, 8+3, 8, 8, 8+3, etc. (Sárosi 1978: 27). In addition to dances in duple meter, there is a dance type, the stick-dance or "botoló" in north-eastern Hungary, some types of whose accompanying tune, the stick-dance song or "botoló nóta" are in triple, 3/8 or 6/8 meter. Some "botoló" tunes are characterised by "proportio": the singers perform a few strophes in triple time and continue the same tune in duple time or vice versa, strophes in duple time are followed by some in triple time (Martin 1979, 2003).

The dance songs are also traditionally of a descending structure, which persists more firmly in the dance songs than in the slow songs. The scales are similar to those of the slow songs, with the difference that there are fifth-shifting tunes³ as well. The dance-tune repertory is far more open than that of the slow songs, since the main point to dance tunes is rhythm. It is therefore easy for new effects, new fashionable tunes to get included in the repertory after being adjusted to the typical performing style.

Unlike the slow songs, the dance songs are traditionally polyphonic. The tune is normally sung with few words or without words, widely varied, as if performed by instruments. This technique having a

3 The first two lines of the tunes are repeated a fifth lower in lines 3-4 with minor alterations.



rich arsenal of onomatopoeic words is called *pergetés* or rolling. The equally vocal accompaniment of the melody is the oral bass or "szájbögzés". The basic rhythm is "estam" in which the even-numbered quavers are accented and the odd-numbered ones are even omitted. This rhythm is characteristic of the instrumental "Gypsy music", and the name oral bass also suggests that this imitative part is related to the corresponding part of the Gypsy band. However, the oral bass works by its own rules with a wide spectrum of sound effects, even if its one-time model was the tone and performing style of the double-bass.

Further rhythmic parts are provided by clapping and snapping the fingers, as well as using some household utensils to make noise. The most often used tools are the water can and the spoon. The sitting player hits the mouth and the side of the can in front of her/him with her/his hands, mostly to quavers. For "spooning" two spoons are used turned back to back and clicked like a castanet. Apart from these two utensils, lids, the surface of the table, the side of the cupboard are used for drumming at places. A stick laid against the side of the cupboard or the door and rubbed by the thumb or index finger produces a friction-drum like sound. There are innumerable occasional ideas to colour a performance. As for the function of the tunes, *Vlach Roma* may sing a tune in different functions with different texts. For example, a slow song may be a lullaby, a funeral song or a wedding song. *Vlach Roma* call the slow songs "true speech" (*čaći vorba*) (Stewart 1989), indicating that the texts narrate the main events and values of their lives.

The old stratum of *Boyash* slow songs contains descending la-ending tunes of 8, rarely 6 syllables to a line. A strophe contains three, four or five lines. The strophe of five octosyllabic lines belongs to balladic texts. Today, the ballads survive mainly as tales or stories with song inserts. The three-lined octosyllabic strophes are the oldest apart from the five-lined tunes. They are mainly known in southern Transdanubia, in Baranya county. They are adapted to today's majority, the four-lined stock, by repeating the first or second line. Their textual elements are exchanged or replaced with those of four-lined tunes. In both strophe groups the lyrical texts are related to the texts of Transylvanian Romanians.

The majority of the four-lined tunes are descending pentatonic tunes of Aeolian (la-ending), Mixolydian (so-ending, with a lower fi before the close) or Phrygian (mi-ending) scales. The popular types have many variants, but a single performance is rarely varied. The strophe-ending formula so typical of the performance of slow songs in the other two Romani language groups (the suspension of the penultimate note and the brief pause before the closing note) is unknown among the *Boyash* people. The modernisation of the style is indicated by elements borrowed from the surrounding folk and popular musics: they frequently use the Transdanubian third⁴ and the IInd degree cadence (ti instead of la, re instead of do) typical of South Slav folk and art songs.

The new stratum of slow songs contains domed structures. Their texts are also usually new, mostly sentimental. The new layer has far fewer tunes than the old and is closely tied to the large group of popular songs.

The smaller group of *Boyash* dance tunes is of the old descending structure. The majorities are tunes close to the Hungarian new style as well as Romani variants of Gypsy songs played by Gypsy bands. Rolling is rare among the *Boyash Roma* as they ascribe it to the *Vlašikos*. At some places, however, mainly in Zala county in Transdanubia and along the Tisza river, it is also traditional. The texts of the

⁴ In tunes of minor and Phrygian character, the third and seventh degrees are sharpened, the minor third being replaced by the major third.



dance songs are usually fixed, mostly consisting of a single strophe. Lyrical songs do not predominate *Boyash* folk poetry; their dance songs may carry equally weighty messages, although humour is evidently more often involved in this genre. A tune performance takes place by repeating the text verse severally or humming the tune. There are some general textual elements that allow for a small degree of improvisation. A clever singer may compose a fluent text from them or s/he may use them as dance words (as rhythmic prose lines uttered between or after the strophes). Earlier, dance songs were given a rhythmic accompaniment on a tub turned upside down, on the back of which ash was scattered and it was rhythmically scratched by a stick. *Boyash* youths have not revived this tradition yet.

The traditional repertory also includes the *Boyash* variants of Hungarian and Romanian composed songs with Romanian texts. Although the *Boyash Roma* include few musicians in Hungary, this occupation is traditionally more frequent along the southern frontier and widely spread beyond the border, in Voivodina in Serbia. It is worth knowing that the international Roma anthem is the composition of a Romanian Roma musician of the Banat, George Sbărcea and it first had a Romanian text. Variants of this tune and text are known in the folk tradition of the *Boyashes* in Hungary.

As regards occasional songs, outstanding are the Christmas carols or colindas (Kovalcsik 1997). Several children's songs and lullabies are known in *Boyash* folk music.

Emergence of the ethnic music culture

The beginnings of the ethnic music culture reach back to the post-World War II period. The postwar social changes affected the lives and musical traditions of both the Roma professional performers and the rural non-musician Roma living in small communities. In Hungary, the urban professional musicians were traditionally the best-known and most highly trained stratum of the Roma. Consequently, many of the highest educated members of today's Roma intellectuals come from families of musicians. Embourgeoisement began among them in the mid-19th century which resulted in a growing number of Roma performers in classical and international popular genres.

One audience of Gypsy music were the foreigners with a demand for high-quality productions, since urban Hungarians were attracted to classical music on the one hand and popular music on the other. That was also why the musical culture and technical knowledge of the young musicians had to be improved. Over the past thirty years or so, more and more Roma young people have studied at the Music Academy and earned good positions in jazz music. The best known classical musicians of Roma origin were Aladár Rácz (1886-1958, Kroó 1979) discovered by Igor Stravinsky, who turned the *cimbalom* into a symphonic instrument, and the world-famous pianist György Cziffra (1921-1994, Cziffra 1977). Internationally known figures of jazz music are, among others, Béla Szakcsi Lakatos piano, Tony Lakatos a saxophonist and Ferenc Snétberger guitar player.

The other audience of "Gypsy music" is the village populace among whom Roma musicians could hardly keep pace with the flood of urban music spread by the mass media. Some managed to switch over to more popular genres, but most village bands had vanished by the 1970s-'80s.

The postwar social process displaced the majority of Roma from their traditional way of living and occupations. As taking a job was compulsory, their unskilled, unschooled masses could only find employment in the industry, usually in large cities far from their homes. Daily commuting or living in workers' hostels during the week acquainted them more closely with urban culture. In an industrial plant, Roma coming from different areas worked together, thus they got to know each other's cultural



traditions. Also, by the 1950s the wireless had also spread in Hungary, and so had the television later, in the 1960s-'70s, as new sources of information. As a result, not only folklore incorporated popular elements (elements of popular "Schlager" hits at the beginning) but the consumption of the surrounding popular musics also began. The collective music-making of young people from different communities at the workers' hostels resulted in considerable changes in both the repertory and the performing style.

The use of the guitar emerged upon the influence of a popular musical movement, the beat in the 1960s (Kovalcsik 1999). In the 1970s the Hungarian folk music revival movement called the "dance-house" movement (Frigyesi 1996) inspired the first Roma folklore ensembles to set up and perform on the stage. The appearance of instrumental accompaniment shifted the folk tunes towards functional music. It tinted the process that most guitarists were not from musician families and thus had no models to quickly learn playing an instrument. Some restricted themselves to playing a few basic chords to which the vocal tune had to be adjusted. New melodic and rhythmic standards evolved that were meant to satisfy the tastes of a wider audience. Melodiousness, the canonisation of the places and lengths of ornaments as well as rhythmic simplification began to inspire the feeling of familiarity and calculability in outsiders familiar with popular music. The rudiments of folkmusic-based Roma popular style were born.

Though the assimilating policy of the Hungarian Workers' Party prevented the public presentation of Roma culture until the political change of 1989, the processes concerning the artistic expressions of Roma ethnic identity accelerated over the 1980s. As regards music, the intellectuals coming from musician families and the intellectuals from small communities took different courses on the basis of their respective traditions. The idea that the prestige of "Gypsy music" as a genre and its performers had to be enhanced had matured by the mid-'80s. To boost the prestige of the genre, the representative "100-strong Budapest Gypsy Orchestra" was established in 1985. Their music combines the ideal of improvisation known from traditional Gypsy bands with the ideal of classical musical harmony. With that step the musicians wanted to express their identity in the peak performance of a traditional Roma occupation and traditional genre, turning it into concert music. Others alloyed Gypsy music with elements of folkmusic and popular music, and by the end of the 1990s ethnogroups emerged consisting partly or mainly of highly trained Roma musicians.

At the political turn, the intellectuals from small Roma communities thought the channel to express their ethnic identity was to acquaint the wider public with their almost perfectly unknown folklore via folklore ensembles. Because of its roots in the "dance-house" movement and because this cultural action was tied to political efforts, the activity of Roma ensembles was called a movement: the folklore movement. Appearing in the media was a slow process. Though the best known group, "Kalyi Jag" (Black Fire) of young people from Nagyecsed in Szatmár county won the title "Young Masters of Folk Art" in 1979, they could not make their first record before 1987 (Kalyi Jag 1987).

The release of the first "Kalyi Jag" record was a revelation for the Roma population of the country. In no time there was a cassette copy of it in nearly every household. The group added popular elements to their arrangements of folksongs, signposting a course of modernisation that influenced all subsequent groups. All three major ethnic groupings had folklore ensembles, which took the repertory and performing style of "Kalyi Jag" as their model, at least at the beginning. The movement thus precipitated the rapprochement of the performers of non-musician groups and Roma communities. The song variants heard from the folklore groups became incorporated in the repertory of the communities, which in turn effected a shift of small-community folklore towards an ethnic culture.



The leading folklore bands arranged songs of communities in Hungary other than their own as well. The next step was to include in the repertoire the folk and popular musics or their elements in folksong arrangements ascribed to Roma abroad. Transformations of some Balkanian scales and rhythms appeared leading to new Hungarian standards. The Roma folk genres of small communities were followed by textual adaptations of Balkanian instrumental genres (e.g. Serbian *kolo*) with their main instrument — the tambura — together. Individual compositions or "own songs" also appeared which drew partly on the folk stock. Having got acquainted with foreign Roma ensembles, in the late 1990s they began to arrange Russian "Gypsy songs", flamenco music and finally West European Roma popular genres, Manouche jazz and sinti swing.

"*Kalyi Jag*", who earned international renown within a few years' time, consistently insists on the adaptation of folk tunes and the improvement of their style developed in the mid-'80s. Similarly traditional in their approach are "*Ternipe*" (Youth) among the known *Vlach* Roma ensembles. "*Ando Drom*" (On the Road), "*Amaro Suno*" (Our Dream) and "*Romanyi Rota*" (Roma Wheel) are experimenting with new genres. The most representative ensemble of *Romungro* folklore is the Gypsy Tradition-preserving Ensemble of "Sátoraljaújhely" whose folk dance repertory is also conspicuous. The first *Boyash* band was the unfortunately short-lived "*Fráçilor*" (Brothers) followed by the "Stars of Kanizsa". Both adapted *Boyash* folksongs in the first place.

Other popular genres next to stage productions included, chronologically, "Roma pop", "Roma *lakodalmas*" or "wedding music", "Roma disco" and then "Roma rap", all based on the fusion of folklore and pop music. The Roma folklore movement was creative rather than reproductive from the beginning, thus within a few years in addition to the marked differences that emerged between the groups in the manner of arranging folk music, the genres also changed and expanded.

The most influential two new genres became "Roma wedding music" and "Roma rap". The forerunner to Roma "wedding music" was Hungarian "wedding rock" that emerged in 1985 (Lange 1996) on the model of a then new popular musical genre of Yugoslavia, "newly composed folk music" based on folk and folkish tunes (Vidić Rasmussen 1991). At first it aimed to modernise "Magyar nóta" or Hungarian popular art tunes in the manner of rock music, and later it combined Hungarian "nóta", traditional light music hits and disco music in a single genre. Among the Roma folklore groups, the "*Nagyecsed Fekete Szemek*" (Black Eyes of Nagyecsed) made attempts to arrange *Vlach* Roma folksongs and international Roma hits in disco style in 1995. By the end of the '90s they won great popularity among the Roma audience and by 2002 they broke into the Hungarian popular music market. Romani "wedding music" is played by today's professional Roma musicians at Roma dance events. Only a negligible fragment of these musicians stems from musician families and there are many *Vlach* and *Boyash Roma* among them (Kovalcsik 2001).

In the last five-six years a new approach has appeared in the process of culture building: a part of the performers do not see themselves primarily as an ethnic but as a colour-skinned minority. This idea was linked up with the appearance of "rap music" in Hungary. In the late 1990s a Roma rap group, the "*Fekete Vonat*" (Black Train), was set up. The name was borrowed from the workers' trains that Roma used to commute on from their rural residence to their places of work in the capital in the decades of socialism. The group draws on American black rap music and Hungarian hip-hop, and creates a certain image of the Roma (Somogyi 2002).

Researchers of hip-hop claim that its American black performers are preoccupied by the problems of American blacks living in ghettos. The two central subjects of the texts are discrimination and poverty



and danger in the ghetto. The texts of the Black Train reverse the ethnic stereotypes by using them as threats. For example, the Roma are vital, have many children and thus overcome the weak non-Roma or *gadže* also tagged "whites" in the songs (Fekete Vonat 1998). They also use the otherwise positive stereotype that outsiders regard the Roma musically talented. This is apparent partly in the virtuosic declamation of texts, and partly in the stress on international genres associated with Roma (e.g. the rap variant of flamenco). The world of ethnic ghetto is the 8th district in Budapest where many Roma are living. They describe the district as dangerous for "whites". For the Roma the neighbourhood is friendly, as it is their home. The popularity of the Black Train and Black Eyes of Nagyecséd is at present surpassed by that of the Roma pop group "Romantic" among the Hungarian audience who perform Hungarian pop music interlaced with Roma folklore elements and partly sing in the Roma language.

In sum, it can be declared that the emerging Roma ethnic music culture is getting institutionalised as an increasingly colourful and diverse culture of many genres. The two traditional modes and genre groups of culture: "folk music" and "Gypsy music", belong to the culture of local strata and therefore neither can undertake the cultural representation of the Roma of Hungary on the whole. The conservation of the values of traditional culture might be the task of folklore revival artists and groups, sound archives and last but not least school education. Today the artists are free to decide whether they want to work for the preservation of traditional culture, its development, its alloying with other cultural elements, or again, they wish to interpret or reconstruct works born in other cultures or styles. The current processes indicate that the Roma make efforts to include all contemporary genres in their music life.

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