

The Musical Status of the Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (Republic of Croatia)

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Abstract⁺⁺

The Roma are the most populous minority group in Europe and have lived in the territory of the modern-day's Republic of Croatia for 700 years. This study is based on cultural and musical research in the area of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, with an emphasis on the conurbations of Rijeka, Delnice, Crikvenica and Novi Vinodolski. This paper asks what the musical position of the Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County is and how this is reflected in their music and in musical interaction with other Roma and non-Roma. The work gives an overview of the musical life of the Roma and takes us through several musical events that are very important to the lives of the Roma in this area. Their interactions with the majority population and many ethnic groups in the area of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County are described through the prism of their personal vision and notion of relations. The work takes a look at the musical life of the Roma and contributes to the better understanding and coexistence of bearers of different cultural identities in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

Keywords: Roma, Music of the Roma, Cultural Identity, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Republic of Croatia

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⁺⁺ Note: We regret that some characters and their accent symbols are not properly represented by our font family in this article.

Introduction

Roma in different parts of the world - thanks to emancipation movements, but also to international conventions and documents - have the political status of minority, which has a significant impact on their social standing, lifestyle and culture, as well as artistic status. Despite the equality guaranteed by its Constitution, the Roma in the Republic of Croatia are still, due to many factors, at the bottom of the social ladder. On the other hand, there exists a mystique regarding their musical uniqueness and distinct talent. A special characteristic of the Roma lies in the richness of their culture and tradition, which is still scientifically unexplored. Silverman (2012), investigating the Roma of Southeast Europe, claims to demonstrate many qualities such as cultural hybridity and adaptability, which we will confirm in this article. In the territory of the Republic of Croatia, there is a visible lack of scientific studies on the Roma, especially works in the field of ethnomusicology. Scientific research on the Roma has been conducted exclusively in a social context (most often on, for example, poor living conditions, poverty and insufficient education), and the number of published articles about their music is practically insignificant. So far, no one has scientifically explored Romani music, and neither has the music of other national minorities living in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County been explored. This paper is written according to a thematically profiled research model based on previous research by the International Council for Traditional Music (cf. Pettan, 2019), and its aim is to get to know and understand the musical identification factors of the Romani population in selected conurbations of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. In this regard, I take into account in particular the findings of ethnomusicologists in the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group. The study of music and minorities are linked in publications such as *Music and Minorities and Ethnomusicology: Challenges and Discourses from Three Continents* (Hemetek, 2012) and *Music and Minorities from Around the World: Research, Documentation and Interdisciplinary Study* (Hemetek et al, 2014). Special research attention will be paid to musical processes in which Roma actively participate. Before starting the field research, we asked the following research questions:

1. What is the musical situation of the Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County?
2. What are their music-interaction processes with other Roma and non-Roma?
3. Engaging in music - for the subjects of the study based on - need or desire?

Methodology

Field research conducted in the four largest conurbations of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (Rijeka, Delnice, Crikvenica and Novi Vinodolski) was complemented by the results of work done in the libraries of these places. Most of the field work in the Romani settlements of the selected locations took place during 2015 and 2019, with breaks. The intensity of fieldwork was greatly influenced by the opportunities to set up and arrange interview dates with research participants. The research took place in time periods four years apart and, on the basis of the data collected, a complete overview of the musical circumstances of the Roma was obtained, as well as some different answers to research questions at the beginning and end of the research. The field research included all Romani musicians from the county who agreed to be interviewed and a few respondents who hired Romani musi-

cians for the purpose of musical participation in their private celebrations. The review of geographical and historical information on Roma in this particular area is based on descriptive, historical, and statistical methods (cf. Pettan, 2011). Interviews were conducted on the basis of previously prepared questions. Before the interview, the respondents were introduced to the topic by the main representative of each Romani settlement. The way of life of the Roma and the celebration of religious and other rituals such as Eid al-Adha, St George's Day, the birth of a child, weddings and funerals were directly observed, modelled on the work of Bonini-Baraldi (2021). Following on from the work of authors Hemetek (2006) and Silverman (2012), the focus of the research was all types of music that Roma create, perform or listen to in the studied area, but also musical interaction with the majority population. The ethnomusicologists Malvinni (2004) and Nuska (2016) were particularly considered as exemplars during the research. First, it was necessary to find the representative of the community in every Romani settlement¹ where Roma lived, who then gave credible information about the settlement and its inhabitants, and arranged meetings with his fellow citizens, with whom I conducted interviews. Involving members of the Romani community in field research was, at first, novel to them: in conversation it became apparent that they had not previously had the opportunity to participate in this type of research, or research in general dealings with their music. Their only experience of research was that related to their social and economic status.

Roma in Croatia and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

Over the past twenty years, research on social topics and education has been most prevalent. Hrvatic (2000), who is engaged in the education of the Romani people in Croatia, offers specific guidelines and models for more successful education. The history of the Roma has been explored by Hrvatic and Ivancic (2000) and Vojak (2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2010 & 2013), and their social aspect studied by Posavec (2000), Štambuk (2000a, 2000b & 2005) and Šlezak (2009, 2010). The problems of discrimination, segregation, and marginalization of the Romani people has been addressed by Babic (2004), Bogdanic (2004), Horvat (2009) and Novak (2004). According to research conducted in 1998 by the Ivo Pilar Institute in on the developmental status of Romani people in Croatia, the first Roma arrived in Europe during the 14th and 15th centuries. The authors (Pongrac, 2003:83-84; Rumbak, 2009, 2010; Vojak, 2004/05:223) state that the following Romani communities are located in Croatia today: Lovari, Laktaši, Kolompari, Kalderaši, Kanjari, Koritari, Burgijaši, Gurbeti, Arlije, Aškalije, Cergari, Sinti, Kaloperi, Egipcani, Bajaši, Luri, Tamari and Gopti. This shows the marked diversity in the present-day Romani population of the Republic of Croatia. In the last twenty years, there has been intense immigration of Romani people from other parts of the former Yugoslavia, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia. Jean-Pierre Liégeois explained that for "states, local authorities and communities, Gypsies have always posed a threat of political and psychological unrest" (Liégeois, 2009:119). Prejudices about Roma are still deeply rooted, the causes being primarily social and psychological in nature. Hemetek (2006) and Silverman (2012) portray the Roma as the most common target of racism in Europe. The Constitution of the Republic

of Croatia, from 1974, recognized the Romani ethnic groups as a national minority, making them equal to the 21 other national minorities in the country. Hrvatic points out that “it is crucial for the Romani community in Croatia to integrate² with the improvement of the social and economic situation of Roma in all segments of society, with the need for them to preserve their culture, traditions, and lifestyles in order for them to become and/or recognizable in a multicultural environment” (Hrvatic, 2004:367).

The Romani minority in the Republic of Croatia is not homogeneous: they speak different languages and have different religions. Most Romologists today think that the religious commitment of the Roma is influenced by that of the majority of the population (Clebert, 1967:159; Liégeois, 1987:60-61). When looking at the language of the Roma in Croatia, three groups predominate: one speaks the Romani language, the Bajaši speak Romanian³ and the Aškalije speak Albanian.⁴ Demographers estimate that the actual number of Roma in the Republic of Croatia is between 30,000 and 40,000. (unofficial results of the research of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia). The reason for this is that many Roma do not declare themselves as Roma but as members of the majority population (in this case as Croats). This can be seen from the following table showing the number of the Roma in the Republic of Croatia according to the census of the Central Bureau of Statistics, in which we can see that the number of listed Roma and the number of actual Roma in the Republic of Croatia fluctuates dramatically

Number of Roma	
Year	Number
1948	405
1953	1261
1961	313
1971	1257
1981	3858
1991	6695
2001	9463
2011	16975

Figure 1. Table showing the number of the Roma in the Republic of Croatia. (Census, Zagreb, Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

Primorje-Gorski Kotar County was established in 1993 with its main headquarters in Rijeka, which, due to its demographic and economic importance, is an independent spatial unit both as a university and as the industrial centre of the county.



Figure 2. Map of the Republic of Croatia (yellow) with Primorje – Gorski Kotar County highlighted in orange. (Source: [https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primorsko-goranska županija](https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primorsko-goranska_županija)).

Due to the incomplete data, we have made our own assessment of the numerical status of the Romani population within the area that we surveyed. Our visits to Romani settlements throughout Primorje-Gorski Kotar County resulted in a detailed analysis of over 2000 Romani people, which is double the number from the census data. The first resident in Rujevica⁵ (the largest Romani settlement in the county, which we will address the most in this paper) was Hamdija Osmani who arrived Rijeka in the year 1949 from Kosovo in search of a better life. He first came on his own and after he had settled in he brought the rest of his family from Kosovo. Following him and his family, other families from Kosovo began arriving in Rujevica from where they spread to other outskirts of the city. Most of the Romani population in Rujevica declare themselves Roma and Aškalije and more than 90 percent of them are of the Islamic religion. In the last few years, members of other national minorities such as Albanians, Macedonians and Bosniaks have also begun to settle there, and they live in peaceful coexistence with the inhabitants of the Romani national minority. The Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County first teach their children to speak the Romani language, the Aškalije teach their children Albanian, and then all learn Croatian. The reason for this is that within the Romani groups, their languages still prevail as a means of mutual communication, whereas the Croatian language is taught so that they may communicate with the majority population. This is also the reason why a large number of Romani children have difficulties with the Croatian language at the beginning of their education because through most of their childhood they have only spoken their native language.

Some of the world's famous composers such as Franz Liszt, Giuseppe Verdi and Johannes Brahms got the inspiration for their superb works from Romani music. Ludvik Kuba was the first to transcribe Romani folk songs in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, in 1893. Also notable were Vladimir Dordevic, who wrote down four Romani songs in 1906, and Rade Uhlik, who in 1937 published the first collec-

tion of Romani folk songs (without tablature) he had collected in the field. We can say that the Romani culture is very diverse: while all Romani groups share many common elements, they also differ in many ways. Music, dance, religion, myths, stories and legends are specific elements of their culture. The Roma have within their own culture many elements of other cultures throughout the world, such as Indian, Persian, Egyptian and European. The Romani culture is constantly changing in today's globalized world and in many cases it is only preserved in the form of an ethnic heritage. It is believed that Romani communities living in more isolated and rural settlements have maintained their Romani identity and national and cultural self-esteem while the communities that inhabit larger and more developed cities, and have mixed with the majority population, have lost their national identity. We can reject this thesis after the fieldwork that has been completed in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

The Association of Croatian Roma, which was established in 1991, has been a strong impetus for the entire Romani community with regard to their national, cultural and economic awareness. There are now a total of ten Romani associations in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County: The Aškalije Association in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, The Romani Women Association of Rijeka "Better Life," The Gorski Kotar Romani Association "Croatian – Romani Spring," The Association of the Roma War Veterans from the Homeland War of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, The Crikvenica Roma and Aškalije Association, The Romani Association of the Town of Delnice, The Delnice Romani Association "Better future," The Roma – Rijeka Association, The Romani Community of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County "Romani Unity," and The Rijeka Association of Young Roma "Romani future." These associations issue newsletters, organize summer schools for Romani children and take part in various cultural events. One of these events, the "Festival of Young Roma" in Rijeka, has been taking place for years now, in April or May. This cultural event aims at combating prejudices against the Roma and establishing the best possible coexistence of Roma with other national and ethnic communities, primarily through promoting the music of the Roma. The festival opens, every year, with the Romani Anthem *Delem, Delem (Gelem, Gelem)* performed by Orhan Sali and his "Pehlin Kings" ensemble. The festival brings together not only Romani but also other local performers from the city of Rijeka and its surrounding area. I will list only some of those who performed: Orhan Sali and Pehlin Kings, Rijeka, RKUD Aškalije PGŽ led by Sadik Krasnic, Armando Osmani (Rijeka), Sebastian Tahirovic (Zagreb), The Mali Rijecani Children's Choir and Morcici led by prof. Egle Trošelj (Rijeka), the belly dancer Sara Saršon (Zagreb) and Roma dancers from Rijeka and Crikvenica. In addition to the festival, the traditional "Roma Meetings" have been held for 18 years. The programme includes round tables, lectures, art exhibitions and socializing. Many prominent individuals and representatives of Romani groups from all over Europe participate in these events. The meetings end with a concert of Romani music, songs and dances, and a folklore performance by a group from Rijeka (as the host of the event), as well as other invited music groups from across the Republic of Croatia. The meetings are organized under the auspices of the Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, the City of Rijeka, and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. It is an event that represents Romani culture and is an op-

portunity to get closer to and get to know the Roma of Rijeka and their neighbors. They try to break down prejudices and achieve tolerance between members of the Romani national minority and the majority population, but it is also an opportunity to resolve a number of important issues related to Romani communities in the Republic of Croatia.



Figure 3. Young Roma performing at the “Roma Meetings” held in the city council, Rijeka 2016 (Author's personal archive).

Musical integration and resourcefulness of the Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

When, during my field research, I asked one of my Romani interviewees to tell me how Romani music came to be, he told me the following legend about the origin of the Roma music.

Once, God created a violin on Saint Peter's back. Not knowing that he had a violin on his back, Saint Peter walked into a bar that was full of cheerful people, who, when they saw Saint Peter with a violin on his back, shouted: “Play, play!” Due to all their noise and shouting, Saint Peter was scared and began to run away. When he got to the door, the violin fell off his back, so he took it and went straight to God and asked him: “God, what is this?” I gave you a violin to play for people when they are cheerful, so that they have fun, and so that they don't fight.” God answered him. “In that case, let's have more musicians!” Saint Peter said. “So who will play the instruments?” God asked. “Let the Roma play,” Saint Peter responded, “let them entertain people so that they, in drinks and merriment, don't get into a fight.” “So be it!” God replied. And so, it has remained this way (Etem Fazli, Rijeka).

We can find this legend on the websites of many Romani associations; therefore, we can assume that it has been passed down from generation to generation and

that it has been with the Romani people for centuries. Pongrac believes that the opinion of various authors is succinct: “central features of Romani music highlight passionate and dynamic rhythm, improvisational involvement and a wealth of different decorations (ornamentation) and deep expressiveness; the most important feature of Romani culture and the national inspiration of the soul to create and move was luck” (Pongrac, 2003:13). Rumbak states “The music of the Roma may be the only true European blues, the original existential scream, inseparable from the self-life philosophy of these people with the eternal destiny of nomads” (Rumbak, 2010:131). Pettan notes how “The Romani musicians have a broad basis for performing music, wider than non-Roma musicians, making them attractive to diverse audiences” (Pettan, 2011:18) and are “characterized by the way music is performed” (Pettan, 2011:42). The majority of the population has very little knowledge of Romani tradition, language and art. Therefore, we can agree with the statement of Hrvatic and Ivancic (2000:255) that the “basic problem in the social emancipation, national and cultural affirmation of the Roma is not in the existence of insurmountable differences or their rigidity. The problem of the Roma is actually the problem of the non-Roma and their understanding and acceptance of the Roma as they are, not as “we” would like them to be.”

In the Republic of Croatia, the music of the Roma can be heard mostly in places where they live and at cultural events that are represented by national minorities. As for Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, the music of the Roma can be heard during Romani celebrations and on national holidays such as World Roma Day, Jurjevo (St. George’s Day) and the above-mentioned Festival of Young Roma, which takes place in Rijeka. At the beginning of the research, the Pehlin Kings Romani ensemble from Rijeka had started appearing in nightclubs and bars over the previous two or three years, where this kind of music could not have been heard before. “Sometimes we hire the Pehlin Kings because our audience has been looking for them more and more lately. We have a good profit when they play” (owner of a nightclub in Crikvenica). This way of presenting Romani music, which was never before popular in this area, gives hope that Romani music will continue to spread. The ensemble performs music that is predominantly improvised at the performance itself. When arranging performances, they do not have a set price; instead, they make money from their performance by receiving “tips” from the celebrators families and their guests. We find this example with Romani musicians in Kosovo: the organizer of the celebration (from a community known for correct behavior and generosity) pays a relatively low base price, and in some cases the musicians do not ask for a basic fee at all, expecting high tips to fully meet their expectations (Pettan, 2011:84).

“Previously, we would only play for our Roma, mostly at weddings and exclusively performing Romani music but last year we began playing in clubs in Rijeka where we were “forced” to play genres other than from the Romani genre. “Forced,” puts it bluntly, but if we did not agree to play other genres, the club owners would not hire us for subsequent gigs. Sometimes we need to adapt to the needs of the market and perform music that the people who have hired us want to hear, whether it be Croatian, Albanian, Serbian or even songs in English” (interview with Orhan Sali, singer and founder of the Pehlin Kings ensemble).

When asked if they have their own songs, they answer in the affirmative and explain that they most often compose pop and hip-hop songs and post them on a YouTube channel. *“So far, we have recorded two videos that were shown on national television. Musicians (a band), who are not “ours,” also took part in one video, so we made a mix of “their and our music” which turned out to be a good combination”* (interview with O. S. from Rijeka). The Roma call the music of the majority of the population “their” music, but as Primorje-Gorski Kotar County is a multi-ethnic area, we asked them for clarification. What does “their music” mean to them? *“It’s any music that doesn’t have our Roma tone and is performed in this area. We also know how to play it, and we perform it in situations when those we play for ask us to do so.”* (Interview with I. S. from Rijeka).

In the area that was covered by the research, mostly men perform Romani music played at celebrations and weddings, while women participate in music at home by singing accompanied by baking pans or tambourines. There is no age limit for performing Romani music. Performers range from 10 years of age (the youngest) to 70 (the oldest). In addition to the members of the Pehlin Kings ensemble, who we can say are actual professionals without a formal music education (although music is not their only source of income), there are also amateur performers who play for the love of it. Young Romani musicians who perform in this area have the desire to become professionals and they want their music performances to become their “jobs,” with which they would be able to feed their families. *“I would like to play music my whole life because it makes me very happy. I have no education and I don’t know the notes. I learned to play the clarinet with my father and from when I was a child he took me to concerts where he played. Little by little, I also started playing and making money. I have a son who is also interested in music, maybe he will succeed me, you never know what life brings!”* (Interview with O. M. from Novi Vinodolski). Very rarely will we find a Romani family in which only one person plays music: constellations tend to be grandfather-father-grandson or some other close relative.

Among Roma from Rijeka, playing music is an economic strategy, so much so that more and more Roma are deciding to engage in music, but not by playing specific traditional instruments or performing exclusively Romani music, but rather with music that brings them adequate financial reward. We can also associate this way of thinking with the Roma from Kosovo, who, according to Pettan, do not generally use “musical instruments that do not make a profit for them” (Pettan, 2002:228). The Pehlin Kings have a repertoire of songs, but they usually play according to the wishes of the listeners, where each song requested is paid for. They most often play indoors during weddings and circumcision celebrations (Sunet), in private premises. These locations are usually different catering facility halls that are rented by the celebrators for themselves and their guests. The festivities usually last from the afternoon until the early morning hours and the musicians play as long as guests remain. They are capable of singing one song in three different languages. This way of singing is most often practised at wedding celebrations where sometimes several different ethnic groups are in the same room. At the wedding where I was an observer, I received information from the family that the guests were Roma, Croats, Albanians, and Bosnians. The desire of the ensemble

that performs is to satisfy all groups to some extent. Why? *“It's not a problem for me to sing in several languages. I sing as needed. If I see that there are Croats at the wedding, I will sing in Croatian also, and not only in the language spoken by the newlyweds. All this brings money in, and we work for a tip”* (interview with O. S. from Rijeka). When celebrating Jurjevo (St George's Day), the musicians have a public performance. Roma from all over Primorje-Gorski Kotar County traditionally gather at Rujevica for their biggest holiday and through dancing and music they say goodbye to the winter and celebrate the arrival of spring. The older residents visit the last resting places of their loved ones on that day. The religious part of this holiday begins with the youngest children waking up before dawn and going to wash in a nearby spring in which their parents place freshly picked flowers. The Roma believe that this ritual helps them maintain their health and hope for a better life. They decorate their homes and yards with spring flowers.



Figure 4. Celebration of Durdevdan (St George's Day) in Rujevica, 2019 (Author's personal archive).

The celebration in Rujevica is not only for Romani people, but also for all those who wish to spend the day in the pleasant company of their Roma hosts and for those who want to enjoy various gastronomic specialties of the Roma, along with dancing and music. Even though the Roma from Rijeka are in a rather difficult economic situation and many of them are unemployed, they always try to appear good hosts. In the last few years, there have been an increasing number of non-Roma visitors in Rujevica. In a conversation with one of the visitors at the celebration who is not of Roma origin, I learned that he came from Sweden. *“I have been living in Sweden for many years, but every year on St. George's Day I come to Rujevica with my family. It's a long trip, but I like it here and I really have fun at the celebration. This has become our tradition and I will come here as long as I'm alive! I have relatives and Roma friends near the city of Rijeka, so we stay with them for a few days while we are in*

Croatia” (interview with S. E. from Sweden). As for the performers, in addition to the Pehlin Kings from Rijeka, who perform every year, Romani performers from Macedonia, Serbia, Albania and Montenegro can also be heard and they are always exclusively Romani ensembles and perform Romani music. *“For St George’s Day we play mostly only our Romani music, but sometimes we play something else: it all depends on the mood and on our listeners”* (interview with R. M. from Rijeka).

“Any sound that accompanies their lives (groups of people) is worth studying” (Merriam, 1964:116). According to researchers, the most popular musical instruments amongst the Roma are the violin, lute, accordion, various types of tambourines, guitar, cymbal, various types of wind instruments, the zurna and drums (tambourine and goblet drum). Over the last fifty years the use of clarinets and wind instruments has become more popular. Pettan identifies the five basic types of Romani ensembles in Kosovo (Pettan, 2011:35): 1. Shawm and drum ensemble, 2. A pair of tambourines for women, 3. Bleh (wind instruments and percussion), 4. “Calgija” (clarinet, accordion and goblet or tambourine with the possibility of adding other instruments), 5. “Moderan ozvuceni ansambl” (synthesizer or electronic accordion, saxophone or clarinet, electric guitar or banjo, bass guitar and drums).

Musicians in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County most often use a modern sound ensemble to perform their music, with the following instruments: two synthesizers, drums, electric guitar, darbuka and clarinet or saxophone (or both together). We can see the composition of the Pehlin Kings ensemble in the photo below.



Figure 5. Orhan Sali and the Pehlin Kings ensemble, HKD on Sušak. Rijeka, 2015 (Author's archive).

The picture below shows a Romani ensemble from Germany making a guest appearance at a wedding, consisting of a clarinet, saxophone, two synthesizers, drums, and darbuka. We see that the difference between the ensemble from Rijeka with the German ensemble is in one instrument (the guitar). A singer from Rijeka, Orhan Sali, also performed with the ensemble at the wedding. Borrowing

singers from other ensembles is a common occurrence, depending on the availability of performers at the agreed time of performance. When I asked the Orhan Sali if it is difficult to perform with different ensembles, I got the answer: “it is not difficult, because it is not the first time I have sung with different ensembles, it is normal here, people hire an ensemble from abroad, but e.g., under the condition that I sing with them. We have a short rehearsal before the performance and that’s it, we quickly coordinate, because we perform mostly the same songs here in Croatia and abroad, of course if we perform only a Romani repertoire, which is usually true when it comes to weddings.” (Interview with O. S. from Rijeka).



Figure 6. Romani ensemble from Germany during a wedding, Rijeka, 2015 (Author’s archive).

They use transitions with melodic and loud surprises during their performances, often changing the rhythm, tempo and also the tune depending on the mood of the performers themselves. The melody is decorated with rich figurations and decorations. The ensemble leaders have (in this case the singers) a great reputation in society and are highly respected. During the performance of the ensemble, it is apparent that although they have a list of songs they play, sometimes it is not clearly defined, so during the performance they agree on which song they will play. At that moment, the singer has the final word and before he finishes the song they are performing, he gives a signal to his ensemble to indicate which song they will play next. This is one of the significant differences between Romani musicians and musicians of the majority population, who must have a specific programme at performances.

Special attention is paid to Romani musicians who play “by ear,” most often with wind instruments, clarinet, or saxophone. Pettan says that in Kosovo performing on the orders of an individual is one way of expressing respect for the client. In a

particularly effective way, they perform “by ear” playing with aerophone instruments - zurna, clarinet, saxophone or trumpet. (Pettan, 2011:84/85). Amongst the Roma that we interviewed, playing the clarinet “by ear” is preferred. Instrumental music differs depending on the place where the particular Romani group lives. The hand drum (def) and rotating pans (rotirajuca tepsija) is most commonly used by women when dancing. This tradition of rotating pans is most cherished by women from the Romani settlement in Crikvenica.

Conclusion

We need to recognize that the many Romani communities differ geographically, historically, culturally, by religion and language and hence in music; therefore, we must be careful to never generalize and represent all Roma together, but consider each Romani group separately in order to get a realistic picture. After field research, we can conclude that the Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County have integrated relatively well into the society of the majority population but there is still room for progress. Since Rijeka, the capital of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, is truly a multi-ethnic city that promotes tolerance, non-violence, different human cultures and coexistence, it is increasingly inhabited by various national minorities who manage to find their place to live in that city. Aware of their cultural identity, they are eager to demonstrate their culture and customs, but also to accept others. Of course, more work should be done to promote the cultural identity not only of the Roma but also of all other national minorities living in the county. During the research, it was determined that Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County perform other types of music in addition to their own Romani music, but this mainly depends on the client. They play for the Romani community, but also for non-Roma who come to listen to them. They are open to everyone and according to the musicians, their wish is not only the financial reward they receive when they perform, but also the promotion and presentation of their musical culture to the general public.

During the field research, it was established that the majority of the population living in the immediate vicinity of Romani settlements is still insufficiently familiar with Romani tradition, art and other characteristics. Over the four years of this research there has been a shift on this issue: Romani musicians receive increasingly more invitations to play for the non-Roma population, which is a big step forward for them. These are rare cases for now, but they are happy about it because, as they themselves say, “we have come out of the cocoon, and more and more people are starting to listen to our music” (interview with Z. B. from Delnice). We can say that music is one of the survival strategies of the Roma and that is why nowadays more and more Roma decide to play music; however, fewer and fewer children play a traditional instrument and perform “original” Romani music, unfortunately. Recently, turbo folk (originally from Serbia) has become very popular on the music scene in the Republic of Croatia, and young people are listening to it more and more, so Romani musicians are already familiarizing themselves with this widely accepted music genre. Regarding the third research question, we can say that for the Roma in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, performing music is primarily a need (usually an additional source of income), but also a desire because, as they say, “we enjoy playing, it’s in our blood!”

It is vital the music of this people in the territory of the entire Republic of Croatia be explored, as this will provide a bigger picture and give the majority population the opportunity to get to know the Roma and their culture better. The people are very isolated and reluctant to talk about their lives, and they are one of the socially marginalized minority groups, but they are very approachable, and they like to present their music to strangers who come to their settlements. It was exactly this openness and affability that I have experienced throughout this research. According to one musician, the reason is that music is the only escape from their difficult everyday life, and as they say *"it is our life, everyone knows us by it! Therefore, whoever wants to listen to our music, we will play it."* (Interview with A. B. from Crikvenica).

The Romani culture is constantly changing in today's globalized world and in many cases is preserved only in the form of an ethnic cultural heritage. The cultural development of the Roma cannot and should not be limited; the culture of any nation cannot remain limited and cast in its traditional form. I believe that the Roma are not an isolated community, but an integral part of the society in which they live and share common general cultural characteristics. This has also been proved by this research. In every job, a person finds himself in different situations-good or bad- as was the case with this field research. At the beginning of the research, it is important that the researcher does not come to an unfamiliar environment with prejudices that he or she may have read in literature or heard from other people. At the first contact there is always a hint of doubt that you will not be well received in the new environment. However, my personal experience during this research has been invaluable. That doubt disappeared when I entered the first Romani settlement and met with those people. I talked to a large number of Romani people and at no point did I feel any uneasiness or discomfort. Each of my conversational partners tried to answer each of my questions because they really wanted to help in the creation of this paper. Therefore, on the basis of my experience, I confirm that only through personal contact can we contribute to breaking the stereotypes and generalizations about the Roma.

Endnotes

- 1 The term "Roma settlement" as described by Jernej Zupancic (2007) was created because of the need to define the groups of housing units inhabited exclusively by the Romani population. These units, in general, are not real statistical settlements. Despite being in near proximity to existing statistical settlements, where the majority population lives, the Roma are not included in their lives at all.
- 2 Integration is an ideal model in which people of particular ethnic, racial or religious groups are equally involved in the community, preserving the characteristics of their culture and traditions. According to (Štambuk 2000,198), integration is not a negation of the specificity of the Roma and/or the erasure of the social and cultural identity of the Romani people. The integration concept should be "translated" as acceptance and integration into certain processes, which take place in a particular social environment.
- 3 The language, spoken by the Roma in Medimurje, is actually Romanian or an archaic Romanian dialect that this Romani group adopted over the centuries while residing in present-day Romania, from where their members came to our region.

- 4 Aškalijske su Roma-Albanijanci i govore albanski.
- 5 Rujevica- riječ ruje znači sunce na vrhu, što je i razlog za ime Rujevice. Brdovi u ovom naselju su sunčani većinu godine. Rujevica je također i diminutiv starog boga Rujevit.

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