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"Perverting the Taste of the People": Lăutari and the Balkan Question in Romania

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"Извитоперење укуса људи": Lăutari и балканско питање у Румунији

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ABSTRACT

"'Perverting the Taste of the People': Lăutari and the Balkan Question in Romania" considers the term "Balkan" in the context of Romanian Romani music-making. The expression can be used pejoratively to describe something "barbaric" or fractured. In the "world music" era, "gypsy-inspired" music from the Balkans has become highly regarded. From this perspective "Balkan" is seen as something desirable. The article uses the case of the Romanian "gypsy" band Taraf de Haïdouks in illustration. Romania's cultural and physical position within Europe can be difficult to locate, a discourse reflected in Romanian society itself, where many reject the description of Romania as a "Balkan" country. This conflict has been contested through manele, a Romanian popular musical genre. In contrast, manele is seen by its detractors as too "eastern" in character, an unwelcome reminder of earlier Balkan and Ottoman influences on Romanian culture.

Keywords: Balkan(s), Romania, alterity, exotic, oriental, Ottoman, *manele, lăutari*, "gypsy", Turkish, Roma, Romani, "world music", subaltern.

музикологија / musicology 29-2020

Апстракт

"Извитоперење укуса људи': Lăutari и балканско питање у Румунији" студија је у којој се разматра појам "Балкан" у контексту музичке продукције румунских Рома. Тај израз се може користити у пејоративном смислу да опише нешто "варварско" или изломљено. У ери "музике света" ("world music"), "циганска музика" с Балкана постала је веома цењена. Из те перспективе, "Балкан" се посматра као пожељна одредница. У чланку је као илустрација коришћен пример румунског "циганског" бенда Taraf de Haïdouks. Културни и географски положај Румуније унутар Европе тешко се може одредити; тај дискурс се одражава и у самом румунском друштву, у којем многи одбацују опис Румуније као "балканске" државе. Тај конфликт је преиспитан кроз тапеlе, популарни румунски музички жанр. Међутим, опоненти тапеlе виде као карактером сувише "источни" жанр, као непожељни подсетник на раније балканске и отоманске утицаје у румунској култури.

Кључне речи: Балкан, Румунија, другост, егзотика, оријентално, отоманско, *manele*, *lăutari*, "циганско", турско, ромско, Роми, "музика света", мање вредно друго.

Introduction

The Romanian "gypsy" band Taraf de Haïdouks are undoubtedly one of the most celebrated acts to have appeared on the "world music" stage. They epitomise the "gypsy", or "gypsy-inspired" musical subgenre associated with the Balkans that has become highly valuable in the "world music" era. I estimate that my first encounter with them occurred in 2002 when I heard them play a short set during a drive-time programme on BBC Radio 3, around the time when they won the Europe and Middle East category of the World Music Awards. Latterly, they became a focus for my research, which centres on the Romani musicians (known as *lăutari* [sg. *lăutar*] in the Romanian language) of southern Romania. In common with the other traditional trades practised by the Roma in Romania such as that of blacksmith, the profession of *lăutar* is a hereditary one, and an occupation almost exclusively reserved for males. The word *lăutar* is derived from *lăută*, the Romanian word for lute, and originally referred to one who played that particular instrument or the *cobza* (small lute). The

2 Some of the terms I use are prone to cause confusion, and can also be problematic. I have taken the interpretation of the definitions given by Carol Silverman (2012: 295n1) as my model. Roma is the plural of Rom, which is preferred nowadays to the more popular "gypsy", a term generally considered to be pejorative. The corresponding adjective is Romani. I have found that Romani, Roma and "gypsy" can be used interchangeably in literature on the subject, depending on the source and when it was written. Where possible, I have tried to use Roma (Rom) and Romani. Because "gypsy" is a contentious term, I use lower case and enclose it in inverted commas, whether or not its use is authentic in the context in which I am using it. I adopt the same convention for other expressions that are hard to define. The most commonly encountered of these are "orient" and the attempted categorisation of culture by means of points of the compass, such as "the east".

meaning of *lăutar* then evolved to describe the fiddlers who came to dominate the traditional Romani *taraf* [band /pl. *tarafuri*/] and developed further to describe Romanian "gypsy" musicians in general.³ My enquiries stem from this question: Why is "gypsy music" highly revered, whilst the group of people who the musicians are considered to represent are consistently a target for popular xenophobia and racism? This apparent dichotomy had been comprehensively addressed by Carol Silverman in her definitive book, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (2012). Silverman considers alterity in the context of "gypsy" music and is concerned with the participation and reception of the Roma as a subaltern group involved in the transmission of music both at the local and global level. Her argument is constructed with reference to the "world music" market's taste for "gypsy music". She discusses how globalisation, identity and representation relate to this overarching topic, set against a backdrop of cultural appropriation and prejudice.

The *lăutari* are acknowledged as conservators of a musical tradition that may have died out without their patronage (Bercovici 1983, cited in Crowe 2007: 129; Kertész-Wilkinson 2001). Taraf de Haïdouks' origins are firmly rooted in the lăutari tradition. Over time, roughly since the 1989 revolution in Romania, the demand for the services of the lautari playing traditional music at life cycle events diminished, and many musicians turned to the song and dance genre known as manele as a more lucrative source of income. Modern manele (sg. manea⁴) can be broadly classified as a Romanian popular-music style that combines local, Turkish, other Balkan and western musical elements. It is performed (in general) by male Romani musicians using electronic or amplified acoustic instruments. However, the meaning of the term manele has evolved from a narrow definition into one that covers many styles of Romanian popular music. Manele is generally regarded with disdain by a section of Romanian society delineated as "establishment" or "elite". As well as being considered vulgar in all senses of the word, the genre is seen by them to maintain an "eastern" register in a Romania that seeks to be "western" and Romani musicians perpetuate a Balkan and Ottoman alterity in the Romanian state. The exponents of *manele* are charged with "perverting the taste of the people".5 Here is another paradox: For connoisseurs of

- 3 By the latter part of the nineteenth century, *lăutari* were more likely to be from the Romani community. During the period of the enslavement of Roma in the Romanian principalities, the musicians and the music they performed were associated with the Phanariot courts, boyars' estates or monasteries. Following the abolition of slavery, these musicians were now free to practise as self-employed artists. Those who migrated into urban centres became associated with *muzică lăutărească*, a style that combines Romanian musical tradition and western diatonic harmony with some Ottoman Turkish flavour (Samson 2013: 174).
- 4 A Romanian lexicographical resource explains that *manea* is "a love song of eastern origin, with a tender and drawn out melody", and the entry confirms the Turkish etymology of *manea*. This definition corresponds closely to the description of a *manea* provided by the language specialist Beissinger (2007: 101). She defines a *manea* as "[...] a non-metrical, partly improvised Ottoman Turkish art song [...]" that has become popularised by *lăutari*. The lexicon does not acknowledge colloquial usage of the word "*manea*" as a broader term that covers Romanian popular music in general.
- 5 I have paraphrased this expression from Manele and the Hegemony of "Good Taste" (Ilioaia, 2014).

"world music" the word "Balkan" when it is connected to "music" seems to connote something positive and desirably exotic in the "western" imagination. In contrast, describing Romania as Balkan at all appears to be problematic for many Romanians. The term "Balkan" has been invoked metaphorically to insinuate cultural or political backwardness. An example of such a British colonial attitude can be found in the work of an explorer, Harry de Windt (de Windt, 1907:15), who described the "near east" (i.e. The Balkans) as "savage" Europe because "the term accurately describes the wild and lawless countries between the Adriatic and the Black Sea".

De Windt includes what was then Romania (i.e. the relatively recently united principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia) in his itinerary, but he might not have done, because Romania's status as "Balkan" is not always clear cut. Bounded by the Black Sea and Aegean to the east, the Adriatic and Ionian to the west and the Mediterranean to the south, geographically, the Balkans describes the peninsula that lies to the south of the River Danube. Therefore, strictly speaking, only the Dobrogea region lies within this area as it is dissected from Wallachia and the rest of Romania by the Danube, which rises north towards the delta region at Romania's frontier with Ukraine. Nevertheless, as so much of its destiny has been inextricably linked with its Balkan neighbours, Romania is invariably included along with them in a "Greater Balkan" context, not least because of the long shared period under Ottoman suzerainty and influence.

De Windt, in a further display of Edwardian colonialism, notes that the "Balkan" soubriquet is not always a popular one amongst Romanians themselves. He states that "Rumanians (sic) resent the inclusion of their country with the so-called 'Balkan States,' to which they consider themselves, and not without reason, somewhat superior" (Ibid.: 250). Maria Todorova recalls the words of John Reed, an American journalist based in Bucharest during the First World War, who writes "If you want to infuriate a Romanian, you need only to speak of his country as a Balkan state. 'Balkan!' he cries. 'Balkan! Romania is not a Balkan state. How dare you confuse us with half-savage Greeks or Slavs! We are Latins.'" Romanian is, of course, fundamentally a Romance language and this provides for many sufficient evidence of a Romanian identity that is markedly "western" in character, setting it apart from its "Balkan" or, even, "oriental" neighbours.

In more recent times, Romania's cultural and physical location still presents somewhat of a conundrum. Katherine Verdery, writing about notions of identity and politics during the Ceauşescu⁶ era, states that: "Different political options had been intertwined for over three centuries with alternative definitions or representations of Romanian identity (European, Eastern, something different from both); [...]" (1991: 3). Boia (2001: 12) describes Romania as being at once "[...] Balkan, Eastern European and Central European, without belonging wholly to any of these divisions – [...]". Furthermore, Todorova (1997: 49) cites two commentators who describe Romania as the "[...] transition between Occident and the great Asian Orient, [...]" and as "[...] some kind of no-man's land, not European at all, but not Asiatic at all". However, for many on the outside looking in at Romania from political and cultural perspectives,

the country is categorised as "Balkan". For many western Europeans, Romania represents a first level of alterity. By attaching the "Balkan" label to Romania, the "otherness" is reinforced by a further remove; a place where a "different" Europe can be found, and western Europeans can locate their own Balkan European "others".

Taraf de Haïdouks

Taraf de Haïdouks originate from the commune of Clejani in Giurgiu County in the historical province of Muntenia, about forty kilometres south-west of the Romanian capital, Bucharest. At the core of Taraf de Haïdouks are a group of musicians who appeared as "Les Lăutari de Clejani" on a landmark ethnomusicological recording on the OCORA (Office de Coopération Radiophonique) label⁹ entitled Roumanie: Musique des Tsiganes de Valachie (1988). This album was compiled under the direction of the Swiss ethnomusicologist, Laurent Aubert. 10 This is a comprehensive collection of examples of the important vocal and instrumental forms that are to be found in the southern Romanian provinces of Muntenia and Oltenia. It contains three types of song: doină – a free form lyric song; cântec de dragoste – love song; and cântec bătrânesc¹¹ or baladă – "old person's song" or epic song. The common instrumental dances in duple time are all included: joc – dance; horă – circle dance; sârbă – line dance; and brâul – belt dance. A combination of dances may be played as a suite. This is called a rând de hore in the Romanian language, and an example of this is included on Roumanie: Musique des Tsiganes de Valachie. In 1991 further recordings were made at the Peasant Museum, Bucharest. Some of these were issued on cassette in 1992. Two compact discs, Outlaws of Yore / Les "Haïdouks" d'Autrefois (I) and (II) were compiled from this material and are available on the *Ethnophonie* label. 12

- 7 Also, for example, the eminent historian Barbara Jelavich (1923–1995) has no qualms about including Romania in her two-volume *History of the Balkans* (1983).
- 8 "Nesting orientalisms" is a concept developed by Bakić-Hayden in an article written for the *Slavic Review* (1995). In the context of the former Yugoslavia and with reference to Ottoman influence in the region, Bakić-Hayden illustrates how a hierarchy of "others" and "orients" is constructed in the Balkans. Thus, even within a relatively small physical area, one constituent might regard the "other" as more "oriental" from a cultural point of view, regardless of their verifiable longitudinal position. The Balkan case demonstrates a micro-example of nesting orientalisms, and the model can be extended Europewide. Working from the micro to the macro, the Balkans defer to the rest of eastern Europe, which in turn must yield to western-central Europe. Beyond Europe, a greater orient is imagined, its starting point and location ill-defined. Given their status as internal "oriental aliens" in the Balkans and eastern-central Europe, it is clear that the Roma occupy the very bottom of the chain of "nesting orientalisms".
- 9 OCORA was established in 1957 for the purpose of making ethnomusicological recordings. It comes under the governance of Radio France.
- 10 Laurent Aubert had himself been introduced to the *lăutari* of Clejani by the Romanian musicologist Speranța Rădulescu in 1986.
- 11 Bătrânesc is derived from bătrân, meaning "old man", hence, cântec bătrânesc "old person's song". Bătrân has the Latin root, veteranus [veteran].
- 12 Ethnophonie 003 and CD 004. The appreciation and knowledge of muzică lăutărească has been

The Taraf de Haïdouks concept was the brainchild of Stéphane Karo and Michel Winter, two Belgians with ambitions to become impresarios. *Musique des Tziganes*¹³ *de Roumanie*, dating from 1991, was the first album to be produced by Karo and Winter under the name Taraf de Haïdouks, and in many ways it is essentially a commercial version of the ethnomusicological recordings as it contains many of the song and dance forms and styles familiar from those collections. Hence, prior to their global exposure as Taraf de Haïdouks, the musicians performed a characteristically southern-Romanian repertoire. There was nothing manifestly "Balkan" about it. This opinion is confirmed by Carol Silverman (2012: 273), who notes that "[...] before the 1980s Taraf's music had little in common with Turkish music and the Romani musics of Bulgaria, Turkey and Macedonia. [...] before 1989 Taraf played mostly regional Romanian music and some Romani songs".

Nevertheless, the earlier Turkish influence on Romanian music via its Ottoman-occupied Balkan neighbours and the vassal status of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia cannot be discounted. According to Robert Garfias (1981:98), lăutari were working in the courts of Romanian nobles acting in proxy for their Ottoman overlords as early as the sixteenth century. Hence, present-day *lăutari* can claim to be descendants of court musicians with direct experience of Ottoman Turkish musical aspects. Turkish musical influence can be traced to many of the components of muzică lăutărească. Although they do not always necessarily refer to an exact equivalent, the names of certain traditional instruments played by *lăutari*, such as the *cobza*, *caval* (shepherd's pipe) and nai (panpipes), are related etymologically to comparable Turkish instruments. 14 Some features relating to the ensemble and form also have Turkish derivations (with Arabic origins). Before a group of *lăutari* came to be known as a *taraf*, the word *tacîm* was used to describe a Romani band. Both taraf and tacîm are Turkish (takım) in origin, as is the term taxîm (taksim), which describes an instrumental improvisation that precedes certain types of accompanied song, such as the cântec bătrânesc. Moreover, some dance types characterised by aksak15 rhythms are corruptions of the original Turkish – the seven-beat geampara being an example. 16 Such dance styles are particularly apparent in

greatly enhanced by the work of the eminent Romanian ethnomusicologist Speranţa Rădulescu (1949–), for those in Romania and beyond. She has been responsible for many field recordings of Romanian folk music and is a driving force behind the *Ethnophonie* collection of CDs.

- 13 *Tsigane* and *tzigane* are both accepted spellings of a French word meaning "gypsy" according to Larousse Encyclopedia online http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/ [Accessed 27 January 2020].
- 14 The close Turkish equivalents of these instruments are the *kopuz* (Picken 1975: 268), *kaval* and *nev*.
- 15 In his essay "Aksak rhythm", Brăiloiu (1984) criticises the popular use of "Bulgarian" rhythm as a general term for *aksak*, largely due to the use of such a label by Bartók in several of his works. *Aksak* (translating as "limping" from Turkish) are irregular rhythms resulting from the combination and alternation of duple and triple rhythmic cells that generally add up to an odd number of units e.g. 2+2+3=7.
- 16 Investigations reveal that the *geampara* wedding dance appears to be derived from the name of an idiophone called a *çalpare* in Turkish. It is a castanet historically played by boy dancers (tr. *köçek*) (personal communication with Professor John Morgan O'Connell, 5 November 2015). The etymology

the southernmost parts of Romania, where Turkish influence would have been at its strongest of course.

The instrumental configuration of Taraf de Haïdouks is typical of what is now a fairly standard *taraf* for the region. Along with the ubiquitous and dominant fiddle sound, the core ensemble also includes *ṭambale* [cimbaloms /sg. *ṭambal*¹⁷/] and double-bass. The accordion has also become a fixture and many of Taraf's performances feature the *fluier* (peasant flute); it is rare for a pipe of any sort to feature in a typical Wallachian *taraf*.¹⁸ The *tacîm* had originally comprised *vioară* [violin], *cobza* and *nai*. At some stage (no one seems to be quite sure when) the double-bass had replaced the *cobza* and the *nai* appears to have fallen out of use in this context; the accordion and *ṭambal* were additions (Garfias 1981: 101).

A more obviously "Balkan" register in the music of Taraf de Haïdouks started to appear through the influence of the fiddle-player "Caliu" (Gheorghe "Caliu" Anghel [1958/9 (?)–]). Caliu was one of the younger members of the band at the time they were emerging from rural obscurity and the darkness of communist rule towards global recognition. He was instrumental in introducing some new repertoire and a style which is more associated with an urban environment. Known as *muzica mahalageasca* ["slum" music], this music had a more "eastern" flavour and featured music with more Bulgarian, Serbian or Turkish *aksak* rhythms. The "Balkan" connection was further developed through collaborations with Romani musicians from other Balkan countries, in particular the Bulgarian clarinettist Filip Simeonov and Taraf de Haïdouks' production and recording stablemates the Macedonian Romani brass band Kočani Orkestar. These musicians first feature together on Taraf de Haïdouks' 2001 album, *Band of Gypsies*.

Whether or not the shift towards a more "Balkan" aesthetic was contrived, the Balkan aspect in the work of Taraf de Haïdouks has been enhanced to appeal to "western" enthusiasts of "world music". The wildness of the Balkan "near east" invoked by de Windt before long translates as "oriental" and ultimately to "gypsy" and "Turk". The

is confirmed by an entry in *dexonline*, an online lexicographical resource for the Romanian language, which states that, apart from being a Romanian dance, the word also refers to a type of castanet ("patru bucățele de lemn cu care păcănesc dansatoarele" ["four pieces of wood which the dancers rattle"]). The Turkish equivalent, *çalpara*, in turn, comes from the Persian *čarpare* (four piece). See *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* at www.dexonline.ro [Accessed 31 January 2020].

17 The *ṭambal* has Turkish links through its relationship to the *santûr*, a dulcimer of Middle Eastern origin that Feldman (1996: 160) notes was in use at the seventeenth century Ottoman court. Feldman goes on to describe how the leading *santûr* virtuoso at court of his time, Hilmi Bey (1820?–1895), swapped his *santûr* for the Romanian *ṭambal mic* (small cimbalom), a portable instrument that is supported by means of a strap suspended from the player's neck. This is the instrument that features prominently in the *muzică lăutărească* of the southern and eastern Romanian provinces of Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldavia. Although the *ṭambal* does feature as an occasional solo instrument in *muzică lăutărească*, it plays an important role providing rhythmic impetus to the music in the absence of percussion, which is mostly the case (Rice, et al., 1998–2002: 908).

18 Gheorghe "Fluierici" Fălcaru (1954-2016) was the virtuoso pipe player with Taraf de Haïdouks. It is said that he was the son of a Moldavian *ursar* (bear handler), and was adopted by the village of Clejani as a small child.

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marketing of Taraf de Haïdouks consciously emphasises these stereotypical features in order to increase the appeal to western audiences and record buyers. This is most evident in the notes and imagery included in the accompanying CD liner material. The name Taraf de Haïdouks is calculated to invoke the romantic idea of the free-spirited "gypsy" living a life of adventure just on the wrong side of the law. "Taraf de Haïdouks" is a French translation of the Romanian "Taraful Haiducilor" that loosely compares to "Band of Outlaws" in English. This is clearly a reference to the idea of the "gypsy" as an itinerant brigand, who survives on cunning and thievery. The haiduc legend is popular with the lautari and is frequently a subject for their ballads. Haiducs were Robin Hoodtype characters who stood up for justice for the ordinary people at the expense of the powerful, who they took great pleasure in outwitting. The word haiduk was also used to describe Bulgarians and Serbs who fought against the Turks during the Ottoman era (Rice 1994: 225). Their second commercially released album called Honourable Brigands, Magic Horses and Evil Eye (1994) in particular adds to this association. While maintaining the theme of "gypsies" as thieves, it also references a romantic association to magic and sorcery.



Plate 1. Honourable Brigands, Magic Horses and Evil Eye – liner notes, front and rear

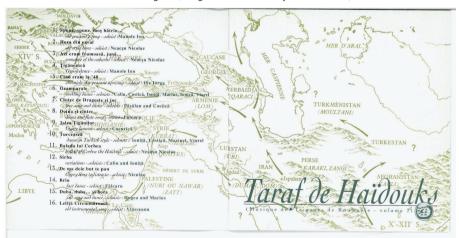


Plate 2. Honourable Brigands, Magic Horses and Evil Eye – inside the liner notes

For Honourable Brigands, Magic Horses and Evil Eye, much effort was put into the design of the accompanying material with its suggestions of magic, the occult and the "east". But other references remind listeners that they are being enticed into a borderland where empires and cultures have converged: Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire; the "occident" and the "orient"; Orthodox Christianity and Islam. The liner notes rely on striking colours. On the front, there is a paper-cut figure of an accordionist, a pair of die and a miniature bible with a profile of Christ engraved on it. The reverse shows "Bosorogu" (Ion "Bosorogu" Manole [1920–2002]) in his living room with his family. There is a wall hanging, which depicts an oriental scene of an "exotic" female dancer, accompanied by female musicians performing for a man in a turban. A picture of the Madonna and child can also be seen hanging further up (see **Plate 1**). Just inside the liner notes, there is a reminder of the eastern origin and transit through the southern Balkans of the Romani people. The track listing is printed over a graphic representation of the migratory journeys that the Roma are imagined to have taken following their departure from the north-west Indian region of Rajasthan (see Plate 2).19

Musically, Honourable Brigands, Magic Horses and Evil Eye shares many similarities with the earlier Musique des Tziganes de Roumanie. It contains many of the familiar dances, historical epic songs and legends, but it also includes dances from further afield. These are: "Turcească", "Geamparale" and "Țiganească", which are translated on the album listing as "Dance in a Turkish Style", "Wedding Dance" and "Gypsy Dance" respectively.

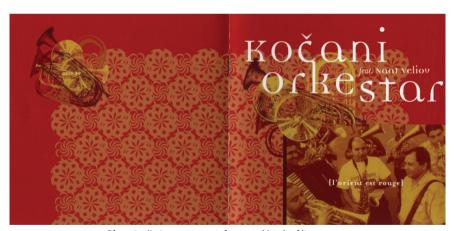


Plate 3. l'orient est rouge - front and back of liner notes

19 Persian, Armenian, Medieval Greek and basic Slavonic elements in the Romani language testify to the route that the Roma took on their long, slow, journey to Romania and beyond (Achim 2004: 8). More recently, genetic research has reinforced the linguistic evidence and furthermore established that the Roma have had a European, predominantly Balkan, presence for fifteen hundred years (Institut Biologia Evolutiva, 2012).



Plate 4. l'orient est rouge (I) and Band of Gypsies (r) – a comparison of artwork

This Turkish and "eastern" connection is developed further in *Band of Gypsies*. This album, dating from 2001, is a mixture of live and studio recordings. Islamic-style motifs decorate the liner notes and the CD itself for Kočani Orkestar's 1998 recording, *l'orient est rouge* (see **Plate 3**), and a taste of this visual imagery is carried over to the *Band of Gypsies* album (see **Plate 4**). A Turkish musical connection is maintained through a reprise of "Turcească" (now called "A La Turk") with additional rhythmic brass and a long introductory clarinet melisma. An indication that Taraf de Haïdouks are moving into new musical territory is the inclusion of a cover of "Oh Carolina" by the rapper Shaggy, which is given a makeover in *geampara* rhythm with muezzin-like vocal melismas at the beginning and towards the end of the piece.

The album *Maškaradā* (2007) combines covers of "classical" and "light-classical" music from the first half of the twentieth century with material that is more closely associated with the core repertoire of Taraf de Haïdouks. A connection to the "orient" is maintained in the accompanying material, which makes much of the apparent debt owed to Romani musicians by composers of art music. They have used this inspiration "[...] to create their own vision of an exotic and largely imaginary Orient. [...], [Taraf de Haïdouks] have taken hold of classical pieces and have "re-gypsyfied" them, [...]".

Maškaradā takes its title from the "Waltz from Masquerade" by Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978) which appears as track 4 on the album. Alongside Bartók's famous Romanian Dances and the Khachaturian, the disc contains versions of music by Manuel de Falla (1876–1946), Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), and a rendition of the overtly

sentimental and orientalist *In a Persian Market* by Albert Ketèlbey (1875–1959), an English composer remembered mainly for his light orchestral pieces. The cover and liner notes make much of the "gypsy" legacy from which Western music has drawn inspiration, particularly the *style hongrois* playing style:

[...] it is not easy to decide who is wearing the disguise: is it the rural Gypsy band playing a Strauss waltz, or the western European orchestra playing in a "Hungarian" style? It's a gigantic masquerade [...]. It's like a carnival feast in the Romanian countryside, with these strange pagan masks which decorate the album sleeve and set the mood.

The recovery on *Maškaradā* of traditional Romanian music in arrangements by Béla Bartók is significant given the composer's well-known ambivalence towards "gypsy" musicians. In language remarkably similar to that used by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) just over a century earlier,²⁰ Bartók described "gypsies" as an "immigrant nation" and charged them with "orientalising" peasant music. He was critical of the characteristic rhapsodic style that they applied – "Turkish" elements such as elaborate ornamentation, augmented seconds and microtones – all features which encouraged Bartók to bemoan the "orientalist fantasy" which he later saw as contaminating the peasants' music as the "gypsies" plied their musical trade amongst their rural patrons (Bartók, 1976 cited in Brown, 2000:123; see also Bellman, 1998:83).

Of Lovers, Gamblers and Parachute Skirts (2015) was the last commercial recording to be made to date by Taraf de Haïdouks. Following Maškaradā of 2007, a collaborative album – Band of Gypsies 2 – was produced in 2011 along with Kočani Orkestar. By 2015 many of the core group of musicians connecting Taraf de Haïdouks to the band's traditional origins had died; only Fluierici and Caliu remained, with the former dying the following year. But, in keeping with the hereditary nature of the lăutar-'s art, the group is augmented by the offspring of both dead and living musicians. After playing on Band of Gypsies, the Bulgarian clarinettist, Filip Simeonov, became a permanent feature thereafter, continuing to bring with him a more overtly Balkan aspect to Taraf de Haïdouks' repertoire. Caliu is involved in the band's current incarnation as Taraf de Caliu. They are currently collaborating with a Romanian electro band, Impex, to create "Taraf de Impex".

Silverman (2012: 46) suggests that gypsies are portrayed in "world-music" marketing as Europe's last examples of a living authenticity that is lost for everybody else. The accordion player, Ioniţa, provides the last words on why Taraf de Haïdouks became so popular, quoted on the sleeve notes of *Honourable Brigands, Magic Horses and Evil Eye*: "At last I understand why Taraf de Haïdouks is so successful in the West.

²⁰ In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* [*Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*], written between 1784 and 1791, he describes "gypsies" as a "zahlreiches, fremdes, heidnisches, unterirdisches Volk" ["multitudinous, alien, pagan, subterranean people"].

²¹ See www.songlines.co.uk/explore/features/taraf-de-impex-it-s-exciting-to-be-doing-this-fresh-a-new-way-for-romanians-to-look-at-making-music [Accessed 5 October 2020].

The West has lost its own folklore and people are saturated with electronic music, they want something more natural".

MANELE

Manele has historical and stylistic connections to similar musical genres that evolved in several other erstwhile communist Balkan states, namely, chalga in Bulgaria and turbo-folk in the former Yugoslavia. A distinction can be drawn between "orientalized" and "occidentalized" manele. The melodic lines of the former demonstrate a considerable indebtedness to Turkish makam (specifically hikaz and nikrîz) and the music is flavoured by elements of Turkish arabesk style (see Stokes 1992). "Occidentalized" manele owes more to Western European and American popular music, taking its harmonic character from the tempered diatonic scales of the West. Thus, the term has been extended also to cover songs in a wide range of styles, often with very little or no Balkan or "oriental" features.

However, if there is one feature that unites all of these varied styles, it is the observation that anything captured under the *manele* umbrella is considered to be in poor taste or kitsch, and an affront to Romanian culture by large sections of Romanian society. It is seen as celebrating the notion that success is only acquired through the possession of cash (not always acquired through legitimate means), women and luxury goods, phenomena that frequently feature in the lyrics of *manele* and visual representations. The lyrics, in particular, are the target for especially harsh condemnation. They are often criticised for being crude and written in "bad Romanian" because of their lack of regard for grammar and the frequent use of slang. But there are additional dimensions relating to Romania's past and questions of ethnicity that also need to be considered when looking at why *manele* is considered so objectionable by so many. Ion Dumitrescu writes that "[...] the Orient [... is] a cultural continent from which Romania will never fully remove itself". Moreover, of course, the fact that *manele* is represented as a signal of Romani culture and that the songs are generally performed by Roma adds to the opprobrium.

One might think that the colonial attitudes expressed by the likes of de Windt and Reed from just over a century ago might have softened as Romania emerged from a turbulent twentieth century into a modern European nation as a member of the European Union. But if the ongoing debate about *manele* is any measure, issues in connection with what it means to be Romanian still appear to be up for discussion. Take, for example, extracts from a conversation on reddit.com (an American social news and entertainment networking website) on the topic "*Manele* music and dancers" from 2015. The whole exchange could form the basis of an ethnographic study in itself. However of particular interest here, are the opinions expressed about who constitutes the audience for *manele* and the underlying messages that the genre puts across.

Contributor "magicsebi" (who one can assume to be Romanian, as they post elsewhere on the site in Romanian) writes (in English): "But anyway, the majority of people that listen to it are lower class, gypsies, peasants or *cocalari* – the Romanian version of chavs. ²³ So that's why you get these strong reactions. Listening to manele immediately gets you a label from the non-listener – uncultured, gypsy or *cocalari*." Just in case we are under any misapprehensions, "magicsebi" further adds: "*Cocalari* are somewhere between chavs, guidos and those stereotypical Russian tracksuit thugs. Best to stay away: D (big grin emoji)." Another contributor "alecs_stan" (who posts in both English and Romanian on Romanian and EU politics) informs us that:

[...] [manele] reveals a facet of Romanian societies that the westernized emergent middle class of post communist Romania wants to forget or deny. You see, Romania was under Turkish influence for hundreds of years and that left deep marks. The oriental sound of manele, the gypsy singers and the popularity of the genre among simpletons was/is seen as a step aside the narrative of a future prosperous western style democracy that Romania projects in the spotlights. Modern Romanians deny their Balkanism, they want Romania to be more like Germany, Holland, France or the UK. The Romania in manele songs is closer to Albania, Turkey, Bosnia as [to] values and views.

Hence, by rejecting any Balkan connection, undesirable links to the "gypsy" with the "east", and ultimately the "Turk" can also be avoided. Today, for an influential section of Romanian society (broadly speaking, educated and middle class), the hastening of a modern "western" future remains paramount. Hence, there exists a desire in some quarters to minimise reference to Romania's "eastern", Balkan and Ottoman past. *Manele* is an easy target because of its apparent musical and cultural influences, and its denigrators can rely on a thinly-veiled underlying widespread anti-Romani sentiment, or Antiziganism, to advance their cause. The *vox pop* examples given above can only begin to demonstrate the degree to which *manele* divides public opinion and the intensity of discriminatory invective it can generate; the distaste is such that there have even been institutional calls for it to be banned or, at least, for restrictions to be placed on the extent to which the genre can be broadcast and distributed. As recently as 2019 *manele* continues to be proscribed. The mayor of Timişoara, a city due to become a European Capital of Culture in 2021, has banned the performance of *manele* in public.²⁴

Scholars have noted that the *manele* phenomenon contains strong elements of carnival and the parodic (Mihăilescu, 2016; Stoichiţa, 2016). The carnivalesque frequently invokes larger-than-life characters, anachronistic archetypes, and an element of the unexpected and grotesque. Hence, references to fairy-tale royalty and nobility, which are a common feature in musical folklore (see Brăiloiu, 1984: 18) are

²³ The pejorative English term "chav" originates from the Romani "chavi", meaning "child" (Jones 2011: 2).

²⁴ See www.mediafax.ro [Accessed 31 January 2020].

also frequent in *manele*. In carnival, rebellion is never very far from the surface and *manele* contains subversive components that challenge convention.

An old European topos associates merry-making, violence, and revolution. Bercé (1976) has shown how the cosmic and climatic cycle was linked to the annual upheaval of political institutions in early modern France. Peasant feasts (of which the carnival is emblematic) were only one step apart from peasant revolts until the French Revolution. This model has influenced the reception of the revolution itself by some of its contemporaries, especially in light of the imminent turn of the century (Stoichiţa and Coderch, 1999). Emblematic of the Romanian "post-revolution" times, manele are reminiscent of this tradition in several ways (Stoichiţa 2016:180).

The evolution of modern *manele* has a strong connection with Balkan dissent. During the 1970s, musical genres that had become popular in two of Romania's Balkan neighbours also attracted a considerable following across the border in Romania. *Novokomponovana narodna muzika* [newly-composed folk music], known as *NKNM* (from which the genre known as *turbo-folk* developed later) for short, originated in Serbia (then part of Yugoslavia) to the south-west of Romania. The other, *svatbarska muzika* [wedding music] is a Bulgarian musical style. *Svatbarska muzika*, in particular, had a close association with dissent (see Rice 1994; Silverman 2012). The Bulgarian communist authorities sought to restrict the performance of *svatbarska muzika* because of its strong connection with Romani culture, a tradition regarded as both inherently foreign and closely associated with Bulgaria's erstwhile Ottoman masters. Thus we find again the fear of "gypsyfication" conflated with dread of the resurgence of "turkification".

Towards the end of the 1970s, the svatbarska muzika phenomenon travelled north across the Danube into southern Romania, where it became popular with the population there who were perhaps motivated by its subversive connection. Earlier, at the beginning of the decade, NKNM had also made its way into the Banat in the south-west of Romania. These two forms were instrumental in the development of a similar musical movement in Romania, which in its earliest manifestation was known as muzică sârbească [Serbian music]. As with svatbarska muzika, it was Romani musicians who mediated in the performance and dissemination of muzică sârbească. The Romanian communist government's attitude to muzică sârbească was similar to what the response to svatbarska muzika had been in Bulgaria (Beissinger 2007: 106-107). In their view, it introduced unwelcome foreign Balkan elements that could undermine the project to establish a homogenous and unique Romanian socialist identity, and should therefore be suppressed. During the communist era, folk music became a state-manufactured product that synthesised existing folk tunes with new words that accorded with communist ideology. It was promoted to the populace as being the property of the rural peasantry with the implication that the state was acting as its guardian (Rice, et al., 1998–2002).

Because the purveyors of *muzică sârbească* were mostly from the Romani community, this presented an additional dilemma for the authorities. Although social homogeneity was an evident government objective during the communist era, attempts to ameliorate the situation for Roma in Romania came too late for them to have any meaningful effect. Consequently, Romanian Roma remained on the bot-

tom rung of society and such as there were any policies in place to improve their condition, these measures seemed to have caused a worsening of the situation rather than any improvement; Romanian Roma continued to be viewed by everybody else as aliens within. This perceived "foreignness" of the Roma, coupled with music deemed to be non-Romanian were a toxic mix in the regime's view and it took measures to prohibit the performance of *muzică sârbească*. This was a difficult policy to implement. Beissinger (2007: 107) notes that performances of *muzică sârbească* continued, especially at Romani weddings, as did *svatbarska muzika* in Bulgaria.

As the genre developed, the language used to describe it also metamorphosed. The changes in terminology emphasised the apparent subversive "oriental" otherness of the music. From the early 1990s, the style was referred to as *muzică turcească* [Turkish music] or *muzică țigănească* [gypsy music]. At the end of the decade, *muzică turcească* and *muzică țigănească* synthesised into the all-encompassing *muzică orientală*, a term encapsulating the "eastern" sense of its constituent elements – Serbian, Turkish and "gypsy". At about the same time, *manea* entered the vernacular, a label that would eventually supersede *muzică orientală* (Beissinger 2007: 108–109). This change of label did not indicate a move to detach the phenomenon from its eastern, Turkish heritage. Rather, it reinforced the idea that popular music forms were firmly indebted to centuries of Ottoman authority over Romanian lands - in name, if not entirely in style.

Although *Manele* also has a significant existence in live performance at clubs and private parties, in common with much of modern-day popular music, many fans of *manele* access songs through YouTube videos posted on the internet. This is the medium through which I first encountered examples of the genre. Consequently my examples draw on recordings of *manele* that originate from this resource.

Artist	Title	Translation	Duration
Florin Salam	Saint Tropez	-	03'28"
Claudia, Asu și Ticy	Zalele	-	03'36"
Florin Salam, Claudia și Asu	Îţi mănânc buzele	I'll eat your lips	04'06"
Mr Juve	Mișcă, mișcă din buric	Move from the belly button	04'30"
Mr Juve și Bodo	Dansează, dansează!	Dance, dance	04'00"
Nicolae Guţa	Multe poze am cu tine	I have many photos of you	03'25"
Nicolae Guţa	Nu poți iubi	You cannot love	04'53"
Nicolae Guța și Blondu de la Timișoara	Bună dimineața	Good morning	03'14"
Vali Vijelie și Asu	Dilaila, dilayla	-	04'19"
Nicolae Guța	Dau 5 lei pe o lumanare	I give 5 lei for a candle	03'46"
			39'17"

Table 1. Best of Manele Top Hits Vol. 1.

25 Serbia is clearly geographically to the west of Romania, but cultural frontiers are not easily defined. "Eastern" here connotes "oriental", but also refers to something "alien" or "other". In relation to Turkey, O'Connell (2013: xv) considers the east-west continuum in connection to Turkish music and raises a rhetorical question that queries where the border between "west" and "east" might be, should such a frontier exist at all. Returning to the idea of "nested orientalism", what is "west" to one, is "east" to another.

I selected for investigation the video compilation entitled "Best of Manele Top Hits Vol. 1" (see **Table 1**), which dates from March 2014. I chose this particular example because it provides a good illustration of how the expression, *manele*, has come to be used in a wider context.²⁶ This thirty-nine minute sequence of ten *manele* in various styles begins with "Saint Tropez" by Florin Salam (probably the most popular present-day *manea*), which largely conforms to a conventional description or "orientalised" *manele* in terms of instrumentation, vocal/instrumental style and gesture.²⁷ I consider "Saint Tropez" in greater detail later. This song is followed by a sequence of numbers, ranging from those that could be described as "Europop", with very few "*manele*-like" features, through sentimental ballads to others that are akin to hip-hop. A certain amount of self-parody and self-exoticisation is evident in some of the videos and many of them employ highly-sexualised objectification of women in their imagery.

"Saint Tropez" is followed in the video by a song called "Zalele" featuring Claudia, Asu (male) and Ticy (male) and another song entitled "Îţi mănânc buzele" ["I'll eat your lips"] sung by Florin Salam, Asu and Claudia. 28 "Zalele" is set at a pool party and is in classic "Europop" style: a regular beat in common time with four-bar phrasing. It is thoroughly diatonic. It would be a challenge for any listener to identify any feature that could be construed in this number as being "oriental". The number "îţi mănânc buzele" again owes more to "western Europop", although the singing style of Florin Salam and the presence of electric violin sound and bongos in imitation of the *darbuka* hint of Balkan and Turkish influence, with Asu acting as a kind of vocal mediator between Claudia's "western-style" delivery and the melismas of Florin Salam.



Plate 5 - Mr Juve - "Mişcă, mişcă din buric!"

- 26 "Best of Manele Top Hits Vol. 1" can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhYEwqm7Hq0 [Accessed 29 January 2020].
- 27 The individual YouTube video (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXO2QtjixaM [Accessed 29 January 2020]) of "Saint Tropez" by Florin Salam has had over 79 million views since it was published on 1 February 2013.
- 28 Female *manele* singers do perform solo, but, more often than not, they sing alongside their male colleagues.

My initial brief description of "Saint Tropez", and my remarks about "Zalele" and "Îți mănânc buzele" set out to demonstrate the wide range of styles that are encompassed by the term *manele*. "Mișcă, mișcă din buric!" ["Move from the belly button!"] by Mr. Juve, and "Dansează, Dansează!" ["Dance, Dance!"] by Mr. Juve and Bodo, combine, in a highly exaggerated and grotesque manner, the hyper-sexualisation of women and self-parody. Mr. Juve (see **Plate 5**) also brings "gypsy hip-hop" into the broader *manele* arena.

The clips produced to accompany "Mişcă, mişcă din buric" and "Dansează, Dansează!" draw on numerous clichés, which together combine to create a pantomimic juxtaposition of incongruities. These clichés are drawn not just from the more obvious local sphere of influence such as the *lăutar* tradition, they are also derived from further afield; there are clear references to "western" hip-hop and rock.

Hai, fratele meu!

Nu e tiganie nici lautarie nici cum ar trebuii sa fie Asta e directologie Cum va place voua si cum imi place mie Hai pe nebuneala.

[En.] Come on my brother
This isn't gypsy or fiddler, that's not how it should be
This is "directologie"
How you like it and how I like it
Come to the madness.

The above words, spoken over the introduction to "Mişcă, mişcă din buric", appear to be an attempt to detach *manele* (or, at least, Mr. Juve's version of it) from its Romani and *lăutari* musical legacy. It is not easy to define what is meant by "directologie", but Paul Breazu suggests that it refers to the concept of the *barosan* (pl. *barosani*); the "*şmecher* (pl. *şmecheri*) way of being a boss", as he put it.³⁰ The author and journalist Adrian Schiop explains that *manele* is his "[...] favourite musical genre, [...]" whilst acknowledging that the form has links to the "[...] kingpins of Romania's

- 29 Although I have not found specific reference to "gypsy hip hop" in a Romanian context, the term "Romany hip-hop" is in use in other parts of Eastern Europe. My use of "gypsy hip-hop" refers to how Mr Juve and his musicians are dressed, the gestures they employ and the method of delivery.
- 30 Personal communication with Paul Breazu, 22 March 2017. *Barosan* is a slang word meaning "boss", a concept frequently met in *manele*. It is derived from the Romani language and is a conflation of "baro" meaning "big" and "san" meaning "you are". *Şmecher* in connection with *manele* is variously translated as "wise guy" or "trickster". According to *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, it originates from the German, *schmecker* (perhaps ironically) meaning "one with refined tastes" (Stoichiţa, 2016:183n6,7). This etymology is somewhat dubious, as a search in www.duden.de [Accessed 30 January 2020] does not verify this definition. However, *schmecker* can be found to mean "a drug addict" in the United States from the Yiddish *schmeck*, "a sniff" (see www.en.oxforddictionaries.com [Accessed 30 January 2020]).

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twilight economy [...]" (Schiop, 2016:185).³¹ Schiop also notes that the Romanian Mafia are indebted to the Italian archetype in terms of hierarchy and terminology. The compliment extends to the clothes that gang members choose to wear, the boss opting for tailored suits—black being de rigueur—whilst his "lieutenants" sport dark glasses, leather bomber jackets and designer trainers, mimicking Italian working class attire (ibid.: 200).



Plate 6. Still from "Miscă, miscă din buric"

Despite Mr. Juve's protestations at the beginning of "Mişcă, mişcă din buric" that this song is different and has nothing to do with "gypsies" or fiddlers, the viewer is confronted by an immediate paradox. One of the musicians is shown playing a cimbalom (ro. *ṭambal*) player; the only other instrument on view is an electronic keyboard (see **Plate 6**). The irony arises because the cimbalom is an instrument that is heavily associated with *muzică lăutărească* and the Romani *tarafuri* (sg. *taraf*).

Somewhat inexplicably, to the cry of "Şarpele! Şarpele" ["The snake, the snake!"], Mr. Juve fumbles a rubber snake, which he throws at the cimbalist, who feigns fear and attacks the toy with his hammers. This is followed by a contradiction that concerns the declaration "no gypsy or *lăutar*". An accordion can be heard being played in *lăutar* style along with a caption on the screen which states: "Ne pare rau... acordeonist nu avem!!! L-a mușcat șarpele in timpul filmarilor: (((". ["We are sorry... we do not have an accordionist!!! The snake bit him during the film: ((("]. The "snake" appears again towards the end of the song, emerging from the bottom of Mr. Juve's trousers. The *manele* world, as portrayed by Mr Juve, invites attention to its carnivalesque, grotesque and parodic features.

³¹ Such connections were also highlighted in the documentary *The New Gypsy Kings*, directed by Liviu Tipuriţa. The documentary aired on BBC Television in June 2016.

RODERICK CHARLES LAWFORD

"PERVERTING THE TASTE OF THE PEOPLE"

Language	Artist	Title	Translation	Publication Date	Views*	Duration
Bulgarian	Azis	Sen Trope	Saint Tropez	13-Dec-11	29.7m	03'30"
Turkish	Enka Mutfağı	Sen Trope	Saint Tropez	17-Oct-12	1.9m	03'47"
Romanian	Florin Salam	Saint Tropez		01-Feb-13	46m	03'29"
Serbian	Keba, (Dragan Kojić)	Ona to zna	She knows	01-Feb-13	6.6m	03'41"
Albanian	Fisnik Ristemi	Ti po më kalle	You light my fire**	08-May-13	25k	03'22"
Greek	Panos Kiamos	Fotia me fotia	Fire with fire	30-Aug-13	2m	03'48"
Romani	Adlan Selimović	Aj Lele	-	31-Dec-14	3k	03'32"

*As of 10 February 2017

Table 2. Versions of "Saint Tropez" in chronological order of publication³²

I noted above that "Saint Tropez" by Florin Salam has become one of the most popular examples of the *manele* genre. This version is not in fact the original one. That was "Sen Trope" performed by Azis, a Bulgarian *chalga* star of Turkish and Romani descent.³³ However, the "Saint Tropez" phenomenon has achieved a life of its own as a transnational number that has become a paradigm for Balkan popular music. I discovered a Facebook page entitled "Copyright Balkan Songs" that also led me to some other examples (see **Table 2**).³⁴ Alongside the two already mentioned, there are Albanian, Greek, Romani, Serbian and Turkish versions. Although they are all musically similar, they vary textually.³⁵

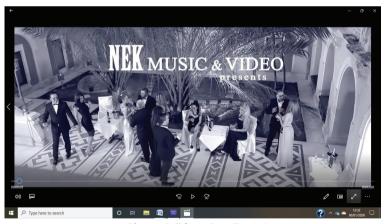


Plate 7. Still from "Saint Tropez"

- All of these songs can be found at www.youtube.com [Accessed 24 October 2017].
- 33 Born Vasil Troyanov Boyanov (1978–).
- 34 "Copyright Balkan Songs" can be found at https://www.facebook.com/CopyrightBalkanSongs/[Accessed 30 January 2020].
- 35 The Turkish version is highly political, criticising corruption and the politics of Erdoğan.

^{**}Translation suggested by Jeffrey Charest

Verse.Line I	ine Form	Text	English
1.1	а	Voi oameni bogați	You rich people
1.2	b	Hai să va distrați	Let's have a good time
1.3	b	Hai să va distrați, of	Let's have a good time, oh
1.4	c	Ah lelele, ah lelele le	Ah lelele, ah lelele le
1.5	d	Să cheltuim banii, banii, banii	Let's spend money, money
1.6	е	Fiindcă ne trec anii, anii, anii	Because we get older etc. (lit. the years pass)
1.7	е	Fiindcă ne trec anii, of	Because we get older, oh
1.8	С	Ah lelele, ah lelele le	Ah lelele, ah lelele le
2.1	а	Viață de măgnat	The tycoon's life
2.2	b	Și de impărat	And the emperor's
2.3	С	Eu mereu mi-o fac da	Yes, I always live like this
2.4	d	Ah lelele, ah lelele le	Ah lelele, ah lelele le
2.5	e	Femeie regină	Queen woman
2.6	f	Urca-te-n mașina of o	Get into the car, oh,oh
2.7	g	Să-ți fac viață bună, of	I'll give you a good life, oh
2.8	d	Ah lelele, ah lelele le	Ah lelele, ah lelele le

Table 3- The text of "Saint Tropez" by Florin Salam

Florin Salam's "Saint Tropez" takes place in a lavish party setting. The opening sequence of the video is presented in monochrome (see **Plate 7**). It is a champagne reception in the foyer of a villa or, perhaps, a hotel. Centre, there are two large palm trees and the decor suggests a Middle Eastern context to emphasise an "oriental" ambience. The text encourages an extravagant mode of living, exhorting "you rich people" to "have a good time" and "spend money" (see **Table 3**). As I noted above, the encouragement to live a life of excess is one of the criticisms levelled at *manele* by its detractors.

ime	Bars	No. of Bars	Musical Idea	Form	Observations
100	1-2	2	Introduction	Instrumental Introduction	
'05	3 - 6	4	A	Instrumental Introduction	
17	7 - 10	4	В	Instrumental Introduction	
'28	11-18	8	C	Verse	
'51	19-26	8	D	Refrain	Fragments of A in accompaniment, bars 23 - 26
'13	27 - 34	8	В	Instrumental Episode	
'36	35-42	8	C	Verse	
'59	43 - 50	8	D	Refrain	Fragments of A in accompaniment, bars 47 - 50
'21	51 - 54	4	A	Instrumental Episode	
'33	55 - 66	12	E	Instrumental Episode	
'06	67 - 74	8	D	Refrain	Fragments of A in accompaniment, bars 71 - 74

Table 4. Summary of the structure of "Saint Tropez"

The *manea* "Saint Tropez" is in common time and constructed using five basic musical ideas (**A** to **E**). These are organised in the form **ABCDBCDAED** (see Appendix 1 for a full transcription, and Table 4 above for a summary), following an opening two-bar descending figure on clarinet that serves as a short *taxim* (from tr. *taksim*), which does not reappear (although it does bear comparison with passages in **A** and **E**). Subsequently, all of the musical material is presented in four-bar units

or multiples thereof, when it is either repeated or modified slightly. A regular percussive rhythm runs in the background throughout, only occasionally coming to a very brief halt at the end of phrases. When first introducing "Saint Tropez" previously, I suggested that the song is representative of the "orientalised" form of *manele* and certainly, in terms of the setting and some musical elements (such as vocal style), it conforms to such a definition. But metrical features, particularly the regular fourbar phrasing, demonstrate indebtedness to the "western" and global popular music industry.

The melodic material of "Saint Tropez" takes note [A] as its tonal centre and is based around what approximates to a Turkish *makam* founded on a combination of *bûselik* and *kürdî* tetrachords. In "western" terms this would be described as the Aeolian mode Therefore, apart from the second bar, where there is a hint of a departure from the tempered scale, tonally and harmonically the piece has more in common with that of the "occident" than the "orient".

Themes **C** and **D** (bars 11–26) represent the musical material for the stanza and refrain respectively. Both ideas consist of a four-bar phrase, which are then repeated in a slightly varied form, such that verse and chorus are eight bars in length each. The second half of the chorus is accompanied by a motif, which is a variant of the first four bars of the introductory passage **A** (bars 3–6). Following the rendition of the first verse and chorus, the instrumental passage **B** returns (initially, bars 7–10 and then 27–34), but this time repeated to give an eight-bar interlude leading into the second verse and chorus. These progress in similar fashion to the way they did the first time around; that is, they both consist of a four-bar phrase and a somewhat modified variant of equal length. A reprise of theme **A** (bars 51–54) provides a link to the aforementioned instrumental episode **E** (bars 55–66).

Although section ${\bf E}$ functions primarily as an instrumental interlude, Florin Salam vocalises the syllables "la" and "le" in unison with the clarinet for the first four bars and the third and fourth of the next four. This is the only point in "Saint Tropez" where vocalist and instrumentalist follow a melodic line together. The final third of this twelve-bar interlude is given to solo clarinet. The range of pitches from which the musical material for ${\bf E}$ is derived is very narrow – the notes [a] to [e'] – and draws attention to the fact that most of the melody in the *manea* falls within the same interval. (Theme ${\bf A}$ drops to note [e], but this material is not really melodic, but rather a rhythmic device.) The only occasions where the music strays above note [e'] occur in the vocal line at the beginning (the anacrusis and first crotchet of the next bar) of each of the four-bar phrases of the stanzas. For both verses, it extends to note [g'] stepwise from note [e'] the first time, and the second, to note [a']. Indeed, it is true that the melodic lines mostly move in conjunct motion, with an occasional major or minor third. A perfect fifth appears once in every refrain, and with a little more frequency in ${\bf E}$.

Harmonically, "Saint Tropez" never shifts from the note [A] as its tonal centre, there being a sense of A minor (or Aeolian mode) throughout. A repetitive two-bar ground bass (minim [F], minim [G], semibreve [A]) can be heard very faintly underpinning sections **B** to **E** (bars 7-66) implying the harmonic sequence; F major 7^{th} , E minor (1^{st} inversion), A minor. A drone on the note [a] accompanies the open-

ing and the material of A.

By focussing on "Saint Tropez", I have demonstrated that this song as it is performed by Florin Salam provides a very useful example of the *manele* genre as a whole. It incorporates many of the characteristics that are associated with it: the celebration of wealth and indulgence, and the connections that *manele* has with the criminal underworld. I suggest that the musical aspects of *manele* have more in common with western popular music than with the *lăutari* tradition, or indeed those other musics from which it may have appropriated so-called "oriental" characteristics.

Conclusion

It is significant that the descriptors Balkan, "oriental" and "exotic" are not always used in a negative fashion. For Taraf de Haïdouks, the words have positive connotations whereas for *manele* artists they are used as terms of derision. The difference is one of context. For consumers of "world music", "gypsy" music represents a life of freedom that has become lost to "western" consumers. In order to perpetuate an element of inscrutability, some distance is kept by the media between the music and the musicians, the musicians and their patrons. In this way, the principal paradox is maintained: Romani music is afforded great value but Romani musicians are not. For critics of *manele*, the adjectives "oriental" and "exotic" are deployed to represent undesirable qualities of Balkan and Turkish provenance. *Manele* is a sonic reminder of a discredited Ottoman past. Accordingly, Romani musicians who perform *manele* are marked by association. That is, Romani music maintains an "eastern" register in a Romania that seeks to be "western" and Romani musicians perpetuate a Balkan-Ottoman alterity in the Romanian state, conflating Romani music with Turkish music and equating the Roma with the Turk.

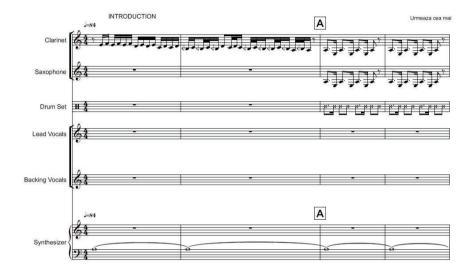
But I would argue that in the cases of both Taraf de Haïdouks and manele, the application of the descriptor "Balkan" is illusory. The use of such a label in connection with Taraf de Haïdouks is another evocative word among the armoury of others designed to appeal to western consumers' predilection for the "exotic" and the "oriental". Notwithstanding the phenomenal skill of the musicians and their entertainment value, both live and in recording, nevertheless Taraf de Haïdouks are a commercial construct of the "world music" industry, a global entertainment, whose primarily western audience valorises predominantly non-western traditional music. Although their earlier recordings from the first half of the 1990s drew from the traditional repertoire of southern Romania, Taraf de Haïdouks absorbed wider musical influences and evolved into a fusion concept. Yes, they originate from an area of Romania that was subject to greater Ottoman influence, and therefore possibly more "Balkan" by extension, but the traditional music of this area is peculiar to it. And this is what they mainly played prior to the 1989 Romanian revolution, as was observed by Carol Silverman. The musical fusion aspect of Taraf de Haïdouks was developed by Maškaradă, an attempt to reclaim "gypsy" musical style from "classical" appropriation. Indeed, the inclusion of an interpretation of Bartók's Romanian Dances

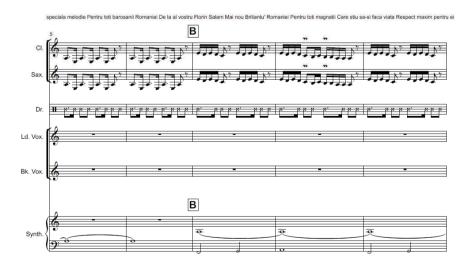
on *Maškaradā* is a means of recovering cultural agency on the part of the *lăutari*. Furthermore, these Romanian Dances remove Taraf de Haïdouks' musical centre of gravity away from the Balkans and challenge the relevance of the adjective "Balkan" with regard to their music, as they are based on melodies from Romanian villages in Transylvania, a region geographically further (and politically removed during the time Bartók collected them) from the southern Romanian province of Muntenia.

Certainly, some *manele*, when performed by particular artists, display attributes originating from beyond the "western" tradition, attributes which maybe imbue the music with a soupçon of "eastern" taste. "Oriental" influence can be detected most notably in the vocal delivery of individual performers. It can also be sensed in some of the underlying repetitive rhythmic motifs along with the percussion instruments used to deliver them. Considering these attributes, some singers (Florin Salam is a prime example) have a naturally quasi-melismatic style. In addition, many manele utilise ciftetelli as rhythmic accompaniment (Giurchescu and Rădulescu 2016: 9). Bongos and the higher-pitched standard drum-kit tom-toms are often favoured over a full western drum kit in rough emulation of the Turkish darbuka drum. Melodically and harmonically, many supposedly "orientalised" manele are based on western modal scales that approximate to Turkish makams. However, there is little scope for a departure from western tuning, because the electric keyboards ubiquitously present in the performance of *manele* are based on equal temperament.³⁶ While the features described may endow some *manele* with qualities related to Turkish *arabesk*, they are merely representative components of a stylised version of the "orient" and not manifestations of an "oriental" style itself.

³⁶ Regev (1996: 278) and Stokes (2000: 218) note that Arab-scale or "oriental" synthesizers are used in *arabesk* and *musikah mizrahit* respectively, although modern keyboards are equipped with a function that allows the player to bend the pitch.

Appendix 1.

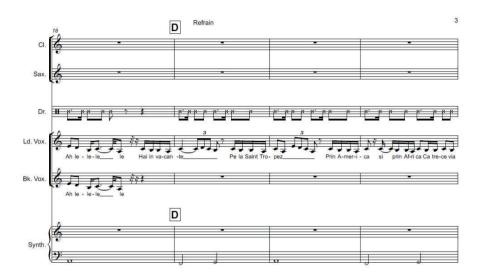




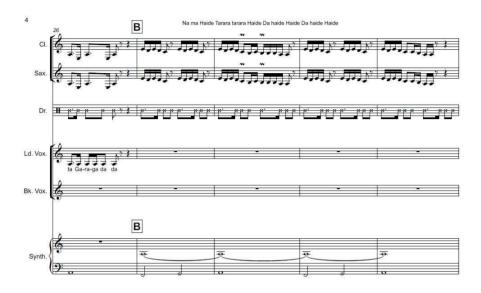




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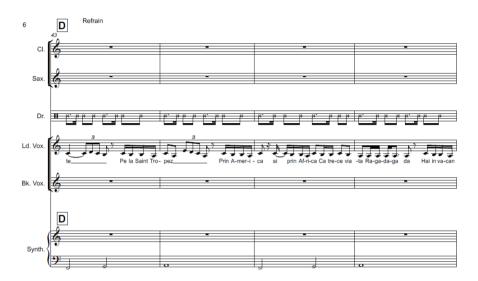




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Родерик Чарас Лофорд

"Извитоперење укуса људи": *Lăutari* и балканско питање у Румунији

(Резиме)

У овом раду је размотрен поливалентни термин "Балкан" у контексту музичке индустрије румунских Рома у Румунији и шире. На "Западу" се тај израз често користи пејоративно, да опише нешто "варварско" или изломљено. У ери "музике света" ("world music"), "циганска" или "Циганима инспирисана" музика с Балкана постала је веома цењена. Из те перспективе, "Балкан" добија позитивне конотације, нешто што је пожељно "оријентално" и "егзотично". Румунски "цигански" бенд Taraf de Haïdouks могао би се сматрати једним од најзначајнијих представника тог поджанра. Истражићу наведени парадокс користећи случај бенда Taraf de Haïdouks као главни пример у овој студији. Различити стручњаци су истицали потешкоће у дефинисању румунске културне и географске позиције у Европи. Тај дискурс се рефлектује на данашње румунско друштво, у којем многи одбацују било какву асоцијацију на Балкан у корист препознавања Румуније као модерне западноевропске нације. Тај конфликт се исказује кроз manele, румунски популарни музички жанр који већином негују ромски мушки певачи и музичари. Стручњаци тврде да је manele пример рђавог укуса. Али значајно је и то да је својим карактером manele превише "источни" жанр, и да представља непожељни подсетник на раније балканске и отоманске утицаје у румунској култури. Та два примера ћу користити као основу за студије случаја у мом истраживању конструисаног "Балкана" у вези с румунском музиком – и у Румунији и на "Западу", с посебним освртом на Уједињено Краљевство.

Кључне речи: Балкан, Румунија, другост, егзотика, оријентално, отоманско, *manele, lăutari*, "циганско", турско, ромско, Роми, "музика света", мање вредно друго.

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