# Roma, Magyar, Jew – Complexities of Cultural Identity in the Spread of "Gypsy Music" in the Long 19th Century

David Conway

In the eighteenth century, in the outlying fringes (both social and geographic) of Central and Eastern Europe, for perhaps four centuries, two tribes had lived simultaneously, scattered amongst their host communities. They shared a number of similarities in their own behaviour and in their relationships with their hosts. They each used their own languages amongst themselves; they identified and carried out their own social customs and taboos; they were endogamous, marrying only from their own tribes. They were discriminated against by the host communities, limited in their civic rights, to own property and to live in towns and cities, restricted to occupations which their hosts did not care to undertake. One tribe was castigated as immoral thieves; the other as murderers of the hosts' deity.

Reciprocally, they deliberately held themselves apart from their hosts, with whom their relationship represented the last vestiges of mediaeval feudalism in an emerging modern Europe of nation states. Already by the middle of the century they were being classified by leading thinkers such as Voltaire as being backward, redundant and irrelevant, and destined to vanish and submerge themselves in an increasingly enlightened European society.

They were the Jews and the Roma.

Count Metternich, according to legend, said that 'Asia begins at the Landstrasse' – the road leading from Vienna towards Hungary – and it is in that 'near Asia', the western part of the Kingdom of Hungary, that the story of this essay begins. I wish to outline some of the elements of the relationship of Jews and Roma in the emergence of the musical style that came to be known, in its roaring success across Hungary and the rest of the world in the 19th century, as 'gypsy music'. (A 'trigger warning' for those with sensitivity to language – in this essay I will use the word 'gypsy' as part of the term 'gypsy music' and not in respect of Roma people, unless I am quoting a third party). I will suggest that Hungarian 'gypsy music' was to become almost an act of impersonation by both Jews and Roma, (including Jews themselves posing as Roma); ironically, the two 'others' of Hungarian society became the icons of a prized national symbol of their hosts. The current academic and cultural trend of identifying 'musical appropriation' might barely know how to address itself in such a complex situation. I must further acknowledge that my topic is situated in a historical and cultural minefield. This is of course true of almost everything about the Roma, of most things concerning the Jews, and indeed of many topics involving Hungarians.

If the fruits of this cultural convergence of Jew, Roma and Magyar can be seen in the 19th century, its seeds in the previous period are sparse, tantalizing and often equivocal. There is

no evidence in fact of any such relationships before the first decades of the eighteenth century, after the recovery by the Austrian Habsburgs of the Kingdom of Hungary after its despoliation by the Ottoman Empire between the two Battles of Mohács (1526 and 1687).

During this period the old Kingdom had been effectively split in three; the western portion remaining in the control of the Habsburgs, the eastern portion, Transylvania, becoming effectively a vassal-state of the Ottomans, and the central area, including Pest, under Turkish control. The period of the Turkish occupation was an economic and social disaster for Hungary, which was left depopulated and almost literally in ruins. The population of the region perhaps halved from 4 million to 2 million.[1] The end of the occupation, after the withdrawal of the Turks and the full reintegration of Transylvania after the failure of the Rákóczi insurrection in 1711, resulted in an almost complete emigration with the Turks of Hungarian Jews. Many of the remaining Jews in Buda were killed or captured by Austrian troops when the city was taken.[2] By 1700 perhaps only about 4,000 Jews were living in the Hungarian lands.[3]

The Hungarian Roma, the Romungre, seem to have kept a low profile in this period, some of them in the towns (notably Buda) converting, at least nominally, to Islam. Jews settling in Hungary from the early 18th century onwards were Ashkenazic (German) Jews who were escaping (as will be described) Austria, Moravia and Poland. So one of the first things we can say about any musical relationship of Hungarian Jews and Roma in the eighteenth century and later, is that it could not represent any ancient partnership, but must in fact have been a recent phenomenon.

Although the repopulation and reconstruction of Hungary was, or should have been, an urgent priority, the Habsburg authorities sought to control the access to the country of the nomadic non-Hungarian Vlach Roma from the East, with frequent stringent edicts and legislation against the Roma as a whole. All these measures were easy to propose from Vienna but generally failed because the Hungarian aristocracy ignored them and continued to do its own thing. They included an attempt by Empress Maria Theresa in 1760 to eliminate 'gypsy-consciousness' by forbidding the word '*cigan*' in favour of the term 'New Hungarian' and seeking to enforce conscription on Roma males.

An edict of Maria Theresa's successor, Joseph II, interestingly stipulated that no Roma should play any music before work in the fields had been completed. It is worth considering what this law implies. It is not concerned – as might be suggested by later condescending Romantic fantasies about 'gypsies' abandoning regular work at any opportunity for singing and dancing - with the Romungre playing their own music. Roma, like everyone else, had mouths to feed, and earning a living wherever possible was always a priority; and in any case Roma music itself was not instrumental but vocal. The Romungre however had developed a parallel trade as musicians playing the music of their host communities' music at

[1] Marton (1966), p. 27
[2] *ibid,* p. 21
[3] Lazslo (1996), p. 70

celebrations; [4] the regulation about waiting until field work was completed was therefore an instruction to those who employed them.

The Church in Hungary during this counter-Reformation period was strongly prejudiced against dancing and music; Hungarian society was content to leave the roles in this area to the outsiders (whilst enjoying it itself). This hypocrisy was to prove for the Roma a means of identifying opportunities in a changing market and dedicating themselves to it establishing, a social status as entertainers which by the end of the 18th century superseded their traditional main trade of metalwork.[5] (And Jews, as will be shown, accessed this sort of work in the same way and for the same reasons). Roma as 'a musical people' became a commonplace in the Hungarian opinion; a 1683 publication comments that they "have a natural bent for music; nearly every Hungarian nobleman has a gypsy who is a fiddler or locksmith" (meaning here that the two roles are held by one and the same person). A landowner from Kolosvar in 1716 complains about a tavern row: "They beat my violinist despicably about the head, and another of my gypsies was kicked in the rump."[6]

By the early 18th century, the first Roma musicians were beginning to acquire star status. The earliest was Mihaly Barna, a favourite of Count Czaky in Szepes county in 1737. Another star was female – Panna Czinka (d. 1772)– who seems to have established the 'standard' 'gypsy band' format of two violins, cimbalom and bass.[7] It became a fashion for rich members of the aristocracy to form and train 'gypsy bands' of their own. There is no evidence of previous 'gypsy violin' style and virtuosity; these skills and practices were acquired and developed so as to please their clients, perhaps, I suggest, with the help of encounters with Jewish players.

The Habsburg monarchy also laid constraints on Jews. A variety of legislation throughout the period limited or expelled Jewish settlement in Vienna or Lower Austria, sought to ban more than one male offspring of any Jewish family in Bohemia or Moravia from marrying, limited the numbers of Jews allowed to live in Prague, and so forth. Only in the 1780s, under Joseph II, did these stringent rules begin to relax. The Hungarian aristocracy were often willing to invite such exiles to settle on their estates where they offered a good opportunity to develop the local economy – in return of course for a tax, "*Schützgelde*", protection money, to be paid by the Jews to the estate owners. Such an example was set by the Esterházy family which encouraged settlement in the seven villages around Eisenstadt, known in Yiddish as the '*Sheva Kehillot*'; and similar initiatives were undertaken by the Batthyánys, the Pálffys, and others. In the north of Hungary, notably in the north of Transylvania, Jews also came to escape from growing poverty and anti-Jewish sentiment in Poland from the mid-17th century onwards; the Rákóczi family estates were receptive to them.[8]

A further, and musical, consequence of the limitation on Bohemian and Moravian Jewish marriages was that second sons went over the border to Hungary to marry, and a considerable

[4] See Sárosi (1978), pp. 24-32.
[5] *ibid,* p. 60
[6] *ibid,* p. 57
[7] *ibid,* pp. 62, 71
[8] Marton (1966), p. 44

industry of catering and music grew up on the Hungarian side to meet this demand, with consequent Jewish settlement in these areas.

Censuses of the Jews undertaken for tax reasons in the 1730s and the 1780s give an indication of how Jewish settlement in Hungary developed at this time from the north and west and was concentrated in these regions of the country. The 1735-8 census, covering 30 counties, gave 2531 Jewish families, 11,621 Jewish people. Of these families, 885 had heads of family born in Hungary, 961 from Moravia, 177 from Poland, 77 from Bohemia, the rest from Germany, other Austrian territories or elsewhere. So already two-thirds of the Jewish population of Hungary was of recent immigration. Most of these lived in the northern and western border areas; there may have been a further 1200 Jews in Transylvania.[9]

By 1785, the total population of Hungary had grown to about 8 million, of which only 38% were Hungarian - a consequence of the substantial influx of Romanians and Serbians, (including Vlach Roma) earlier in the century. Hungary had become a multicultural community with a complex social structure; a Magyar aristocracy, some of them proprietors of vast estates, foreigners encouraged to immigrate to stimulate trade industry and agriculture, a Hungarian peasantry, developing urban communities, and of course our two tribes. At this point the Jewish population of Hungary had risen to perhaps 80,000; around this time began substantial Jewish immigration from Galicia (now in southern Poland), which Austria had annexed in the breakup of Poland in 1772, and the Jewish population of Hungary continued to expand at a dramatic rate, reaching about 130,000 in 1805 and maybe 200,000 by 1825.[10]

This migration of Jews to the region undoubtedly had musical consequences. Sándor Scheiber has compiled lists of about 100 Jewish musicians in Hungary from 1650 to 1795, with information taken from records in the *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica* (a massive publishing project which spanned the 20th century). Many of these are violinists, many have German names, and a few of them are noted as having come from Moravia (the origins of the vast majority aren't noted). Locations of these musicians include the '*Sheva Kehillot*', Arad (Transylvania), Trencin, Nitra and Zlaté Klasy (now in Slovakia), Oroszvar (now part of Bratislava), Bratislava itself, Obuda, Keszthely, and many other places, mostly in the west and north.[11]

That Jewish musicians could become a force in the Hungarian music trades is attested by attempts to stop them; in 1716 the council of Köszeg determined there were too many of them and banned them from playing in inns; in 1781 the Jewish musicians of Somogy complained that their counterparts from Tolna were invading their pitch and got them banned; the Tolna Jewish musicians then obtained a reciprocal ban on the Somogy musicians.[12] The skill and popularity Jewish musicians of Toponár in Somogy county feature in the 1798 narrative poem *Dorottya* by the writer Mihaly Csokonai, where they play a

[9] Marton (1996), p. 35
[10] McCagg (1989), p. 125
[11] See Scheiber (1968) and Scheiber (1976)
[12] Patai (1996), p. 209

variety of popular music from different European traditions before being called on to play a Hungarian dance.[13]

The earliest description we have of Jewish violin style is given by the Bohemian composer and virtuoso František (Franz) Benda (1709–86), reminiscing in his 1756 autobiography about the 1720s, when he was a student in Prague:

"My father … forced me to play [the violin] in taverns, which I utterly disliked. In those days, an old Jew, whose name was Lebl, and who was born blind, used to play for dancing in another tavern. He was a man with quite excellent gifts for music. He himself composed the pieces he played and played exactly and very clearly, even the high notes, and he was able to make his instrument sound exceedingly sweet, although his violin was not particularly good. I often followed him to have the opportunity to think about the way he played and I must honestly admit that I received more stimulation from him than from my master."

When the English music historian Charles Burney visited Benda in 1772 in Berlin, Benda was still talking of "his obligation to the old Jew for stimulating him to excel on the violin" and Benda's colleagues remarked that the intensity of his style when at his peak (he was now rather frail) had "frequently drawn tears from them in performing."[14] The sweetness of tone, accuracy, and emotionality which Benda learnt from Lebl, and which have subsequently been identified as amongst the notable traits of Jewish (and Roma) violinists, were certainly to feature in "gypsy music".

*Figure 1. The camp of the Hussars. (with permission of the Gemer-Malohont Museum, Rimavská Sobota, Slovakia)*

This painting, by an anonymous artist, and dating from around 1760/1780, hangs today at the Gemer-Malohont Museum in Rimavská Sobota, Slovakia, (formerly Rimaszombat, Hungary). It is documented from the 1880s when it was owned by the Szentmiklossy family, which was related to the influential Andrássy family from whom the painting may have

[13] Sarossi (1971), p. 64
[14] Burney (1959) II, p. 175

originated. This seems to be the earliest (or earliest-surviving) painting of both Jewish and Roma musicians in Hungary.[15]

What it exactly depicts is a matter of debate. It is generally known as 'The Camp of the Hussars' and became esteemed as an important representation of these iconic Hungarian warriors; it was, for example, a major feature of the prize-winning Hungarian Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1900.[16] A likely explanation of the picture is that this is a festive meeting of Hungarian and Austrian troops near their mutual border, perhaps north of Pozsony (now Bratislava) in Nyitra county, in the westward stretch of the Carpathians.

At the right of the picture we have a Jewish band, bearded and behatted, playing fiddles and a cimbalom (note that it is the Jews who are playing this instrument normally associated with the Roma; in Hungary one form of tuning the instrument was known as 'Jewish' at least as late as a hundred years ago).[17] By their uniforms we may see that the soldiers to whom they are playing are Austrian. By the dancing taking place, we may gain the impression that this is a relatively restrained 'round dance'. The army of Hungary if the 18th century included no military musicians. As it was at that time a custom for Hungarian noblemen to recruit local gypsy bands for their own entertainment, we can deduce that army officers requiring musicians began to employ them too; and that the same circumstances would have applied in respect of local Jewish musicians.

Providing the entertainment on the left of the picture is a Roma band - smoking their pipes, playing fiddles and a cello. They are more or less in rags; we can see a few bare limbs. Behind them we see Hussars undertaking some of the acrobatics that were associated with the *verbunk,* the Hussar recruiting ceremony. This part of the picture gives us a snapshot - alas without sound - of '*verbunkos*' music– a sentimentalized version of which launched the *csárdás* 'gypsy music tradition' (the word *csárdás* means 'tavern'). By the end of the eighteenth century it is this style which had begun to capture popular imagination and commenced making 'gypsy musicians' fashionable.

*Verbunkos* is not to be casually construed as being either Roma or Hungarian (or for that matter Jewish) folk music. The *verbunkos* dance holds an ambiguous, and often hotly-debated, position in Hungarian music history. The original *verbunkos* dance, which was traditionally accompanied by melodies played on a single bagpipe, featured a display, at first stately, then more energetic, of the dancing Hussars, which would inspire potential recruits to join up. The original music would have been a drone plus a simple melody. (Incidentally there are no records of Roma or indeed Jewish bagpipers at any time – the bagpipe was purely a shepherd or peasant instrument[18]).

A clear implication of the picture is that there will not have been any significant difference in the types of music that Jews and Roma played at these events. Clearly what is wanted at a festivity is music that participants would have been comfortable dancing to – and that would

[15] Kolár and Korenová (2015), pp. 249-250
[16] *ibid.*
[17] Sárosi (2017), p. 75
[18] Sárosi (1986), p. 130

not have included the 'private' music of Jews and Roma. The growing trend of romanticism during the late 18th century, which could raise the exotic to the status of the desirable, had not penetrated rural Hungary. Note that the violins and bass in the picture are 'West-European' in style, not like the crude cello-gardons or peasant oblong violins which were sometimes made of a single block of wood and were played vertically, rather than under the chin. These musicians are playing popular European popular dance music, not peasant folk-music.

One further, exciting, implication of the picture; people are dancing to the music of the Roma band and at the same time some Hussars are doing their *verbunk* performance – we may be, as it were, witnessing the moment when the *verbunkos* melodies, ethos and solo display were transforming into the popular dance of the *csárdás*.

It is this popular evolution of the *verbunkos* dance which developed into a very specific form and structure which was to have an important part in the relationship of Jewish and Roma musicians for at least a century. The rhapsodic form of this music as incarnated by Liszt, other romantic composers, and 19th century urban 'gypsy bands', typically includes an improvisation-style introduction (*hallogato*) to a slow dance section (*lassan*), gradually accelerating to a faster conclusion (*friss*). Technical features of include highly dotted rhythms, virtuoso instrumental passages, melodies and scales including minor second intervals, and a final cadence melody and rhythm of *bókazó*, which perhaps derives from the snapping of heels or spur-clicking. Another feature which was adopted and had been specific to the Romungre performance tradition of the early 18th century was the doubling of a melodic line in 3rds or 6ths. All of these were clearly enjoyed and recycled by the early creators of this music and their 19th century successors. None of them feature as such in Hungarian traditional peasant music – which is generally vocal, text-based, in pentatonic or modal scales, and whose rhythms are predicated on the speech-patterns of the underlying verse. Early *verbunkos* practice doubtless reflected these simpler patterns. But it was these 'artificial' elements which fed into the *csárdás*-craze which was to condition the received image of Hungarian music at home and abroad.

The origins and 'ownership' of this *csárdás* style has been bitterly contested for nearly 200 years. Franz Liszt, writing the first study of what he considered gypsy music, *Des Bohémiens et de leur Musique en Hongrie* (1st edition 1859) credited the composition and inspiration of the *style hongroise*, as well as its performance, to the Roma, thereby infuriating Hungarian intellectuals. (In this work incidentally Liszt also took some uncomplimentary swipes at Jewish music and musicians, which were further exacerbated without his knowledge by his friend Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein in the second, 1881, edition).[19]

Béla Bartók made the situation very clear in a swingeing attack in 1931:

"I should like to state that what people (including Hungarians) call 'gypsy music' is not gypsy music but Hungarian music; it is not old folk music but a fairly recent type of Hungarian popular art music composed, practically without exception, by Hungarians of the

[19] See Walker, (1989), pp. 380-90 and Walker (1996), pp. 405-409.

upper middle class. But while a Hungarian gentleman may compose music, it is traditionally unbecoming to his social status to perform it "for money" – only gypsies are supposed to do that. […] The role of this popular art music is to furnish entertainment and to satisfy the needs of those whose artistic sensibilities are of a low order…"[20]

By the period of the Rimasvská Sobota painting, we have records of 'gypsy bands' throughout western and northern Hungary. In 1782 it was estimated that there were nearly 1600 Roma musicians in Hungary as a whole. We also have other tantalizing information about Roma/Jewish musical cooperation. As examples: the Roma band at Szeged in the south of the country could not cope with demand at Carnival time and in 1800 Jewish musicians were brought in from Újvídek (now Novi Sad, Serbia), about 70 miles away, to help them out;[21] a Hungarian nobleman in 1789 enthuses about a "band mixing Jews and Gypsies".[22]

In the eastern regions and Transylvania, Jewish and Roma musical cooperation took a rather different form; this may be because the Jewish immigrants to this region were speakers of Polish Yiddish, rather than the German Yiddish of the Czech Jews, and brought with them a rather different musical inflection and tradition.[23] In these lands, the music historian Philip Bohlman writes, "just as Jewish and Rom repertories intersected, so too did Jewish and Rom musicians perform together", the former bringing with them "a full range of village music ranging from […] hassidic tunes […] to the klezmer tunes that [entered the region] from the east and the southeast" at the turn of the 19th century. Bohlmann calls this "the transformation of a premodern multiculturalism to a modern cosmopolitanism" [24]– a description which could be equally, or maybe even better, applied to the evolution by the Roma, (and, as we shall see, some Jews), of the *verbunkos* style to the *csárdás* on behalf of the early Hungarian nationalist movement.

A host of factors at the start of the 19th century began to change the landscape for European musicians who had been outside the traditional arts milieux of the Church and the aristocracy. Amongst these, and closely inter-related: the opening of civil society in Europe following the Napoleonic Wars; the development of a modern Europe-wide music industry, with urban centres taking the lead in disseminating popular as well as 'cultured' musical fashions; and the ethos of Romanticism, in which the Other, so far from being despised, became admirable or fascinating. Jews and Roma musicians began benefiting from these trends in similar ways, and at the start their identities as popular musicians in Central Europe and as standard bearers for Hungarian music were almost interchangeable, though by the middle of the century their paths had become somewhat different.

A key to this was the growth of Hungarian nationalism from the end of the 18th c. onwards, and the adoption and development of *verbunkos* as its emblem by its supporters (as noted by Bartók). An early star was the virtuoso Roma violinist János Bihari (1764-1827), who had created at the start of the nineteenth century an orchestra of four violins and a cimbalom, and

[20] Bartok (1947), 240-241
[21] Sarossi (1978), p. 64
[22] Sárossi (2017), p. 48.
[23] I am indebted for this insight to Walter Zev Feldman.
[24] Bohlmann (2008), p. 16-17

whose success led him to play at the Congress of Vienna in 1814 and the coronation ceremony in 1825 at Pozsony. He popularized, and may indeed have created, the melody later used by Liszt and Berlioz as the 'Rákóczi March'.

The Budapest 'Sunday News' of February 1875 carried a feature with pictures of the four 'founders of Hungarian dance music'. These included Bihari, Janos Lavotta, from a family of the Hungarian nobility, the Magyar Ignaz Ruzitska and the band leader and composer Márk Rózsavölgyi, (all of whom were credited as gypsy by Liszt). Rózsavölgyi, intended by his family to work as a clerk and book-keeper, had determined whilst working as a teenager in Pest to devote himself to the violin, and never looked back. He became a laureate of the Hungarian Veszprem Music Society whose publications did much to raise the profile of this style of music in the 1820s and to fuel Hungarian nationalism. The society published 15 volumes of Hungarian dance music containing 136 dances, edited by Ruzitska, of which 18 were by Rózsavölgyi. In 1833, the Hungarian journal "Honművész" announced "Mr. Márk Rózsavölgyi, the former Orpheus of Bács, after many years has left his residence in Bács County, and moved to Pest. This entrancing musical talent and composer of majestic Hungarian songs, first introduced himself with his charming violin to the audience of Pest almost 25 years ago. We hope that as he settles in Pest he will surprise his listeners with new compositions".[25] Liszt was a great fan, and used melodies of Rózsavölgyi in his Hungarian Rhapsodies nos. 8 and 12. On his death the patriotic Hungarian poet Sandor Petöffi wrote a eulogy of him as a true Hungarian.

Rózsavölgyi was in fact born Mordechai Rosenthal to a poor Jewish family in Balassagyarmat in the county of Nograd in 1789, and indeed it seems that most of his orchestra was also Jewish. His new surname, the Hungarian for 'rose valley' – (Rosenthal) - was awarded to him by the Veszprem Music Society in 1824. By the time he moved to Pest, the other three heroes of the 'Sunday News' were dead, and Rózsavölgyi was indeed the supreme surviving leader of this style until he died in 1848. He has reasonably been called "the last master of the verbunkos and the first master of the czardas"[26] as his compositions take the style out of folk music and into the ball-room.

When Hungarian music became increasingly a symbol in the 1840s for Hungarian nationalism, one of its most notable exponents was the violinist Ede Reményi, born 1828, who made his debut in 1846 in Pest and in the next two years performed in Paris and London; his involvement with the 1848 uprising led him to exile himself for a while in America. Returning in 1850 he paired up with the young Johannes Brahms for successful tours of Germany featuring czardas style music, with Brahms frequently improvising accompaniments. This was Brahms's introduction to a style which was to bring him fame and fortune. He was later to use in his Hungarian Dances and other works melodies which he himself believed to be of Hungarian folk origin but were in fact composed by Reményi.[27]

Franz Liszt was a great admirer of Reményi and wrote

[25] Cited in Réti (n.d.)
[26] Handrigan (1995), p.53
[27] *ibid*, p. 56

> Reményi's ideal is the gypsy ideal in all its sombre passion…A gypsy amour-propre drives him … for, [after playing] Bach or Vieuxtemps … he comes back to his *lassan* and *friska* with a redoubled animation, as if saying silently to his audience "See how much better we gypsies can do!"[28]

Reményi however was no 'gypsy'; he was born Eduard Hoffman to a Jewish goldsmith's family in the city of Miskolc. ('Reményi' is the Hungarian word for hope, as in 'hoff-man'). He had been a fellow student of Joseph Joachim, himself a protégé of Felix Mendelssohn, and introduced Joachim to Brahms – the start of what was to be a life-long if sometimes tempestuous friendship. Joachim was Jewish, born in Köpcsény in Hungary, (today Kittsee in Austria), one of the '*Sheva Kehillot*'. His 'Hungarian' Violin Concerto of 1857, with its finale "alla zingara" was claimed by a contemporary to 'bear the stamp of nationality in such a degree that even the connoisseur would hardly be able to distinguish between them and the ancient Hungarian gypsy melodies.'[29] Something of blind Lebl lived on in Joachim, who wrote that "since Benda's time one learns violin playing after his method in the Royal Prussian Musikakademie – today naturally called the German school – and I am perhaps its last representative."[30]

And we can add to Joachim's concerto as an adoption of the *csárdás*-style the Violin Concerto and other 'Hungarian-style' music of Karl Goldmark, born in 1830, the son of the *chazan* (synagogue cantor) of Keszthely, operettas of Imre Kálmán and Oscar Straus, (and may be those of the quarter-Jewish Johann Strauss II), and a welter of dance music in the style composed by Jewish composers and bandleaders throughout the 19th and early 20th-cenuries.

The 'artistic' school of violin-playing in Hungary was dominated during the 19th century by Jewish players. Joseph Böhm, born in Pest in 1795, became professor at the Vienna Conservatory in 1819, where he taught both Joachim and Reményi, as well as the German Hungarian Jenő Hubay, who from 1886 was the head of the Liszt Academy in Budapest. Hubay taught many virtuosi, including (amongst his Jewish students) Andre Gertler and Jenő Blau, who later became the conductor Eugene Ormandy. Budapest and the Liszt Academy remained a magnet for Jewish violinists from rural Hungary. Joszef Szigeti recalls his two-metre tall double-bass playing uncle, who performed with "a band of assorted uncles" in the Máramaros region (today in Romania). Szigeti's father later led a café band in Budapest. Another uncle, Dezsö, was "the first classical violinist to emerge from our band" and became a pupil of Hubay (and in his later years a member of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra in New York).[31] Szigeti himself went on to study with Hubay.

The history of Roma musicians was not able to parallel this progress. One major inhibiting factor was doubtless that the Roma, unlike the Jews, were not literate and this disabled them from making the easier transfer that the Jews could undertake, from one set of laws and culture to another. Social acceptance by their host cultures, even at a superficial level, was for

[28] Liszt (1881), p. 518 (my translation)
[29] Moser (1901), p. 181
[30] Cited in Benda (1991), p. x
[31] Szigeti (1976), pp. 3-5.

them not a realistic ambition (and is not easy even today as a consequence of their history). A cautionary tale is given by Liszt's sponsoring of the 12-year old violinist Josi Sárai, 'discovered' by a Hungarian count on his estate, and presented to Liszt in Paris in 1844. Despite Liszt's attempts to have him educated by the violinist Lambert Massart, Josi's inclinations to petty crime and self-indulgence meant the experiment was a disastrous failure. Josi ran off and wrote to Liszt 15 years later to say that he was now playing with a gypsy ban in Debrecen and was married to a Roma wife[32].

While in rural areas of Hungary there was ongoing cooperation and understanding between local Roma and Jewish musicians until the Holocaust, in the urban world where music had become an artistic commodity, we have a different story. Jewish musicians were able to promote this music through institutions such as the Vezsprem Music Society, or on concert platforms, in or approaching the realms of European 'high culture'; the Roma carried on at the level of café society at best.

But even here they could be challenged by Jewish *kappelen* and soloists playing 'gypsy music' in the restaurants of Budapest and abroad. Poldi Fehér (Leopold Weiss) (1847-1915) and his band won medals at world exhibitions in Vienna (1873) and Paris (1878). A writer of 1907 notes that the best café band for gypsy music in Budapest at the time was that of Elek Vörös, who had played with his band at the Paris Exposition of 1900, (where the 'Camp of the Hussars' was shown).[33] Jewish songwriters in this genre included Náci Sas (Miklós Ádler, 1875-1926) and his brother László Ányos (László Ádler,1881-1938).[34]

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century, the spread of 'gypsy music', both geographical and cultural, had led its Jewish and Roma proponents on differing pathways. Roma musicians, having started virtually from the same place and performance skills as Jewish musicians in the Hungarian genre, benefited from wages and tips in the towns but were not able to advance further. Roma performing in cafes may have been of genuine Roma stock, those who took the star roles as gypsies in operetta theatres, or played "Hungarian" music on concert stages across the world, were not.

And that problem of social status effectively persists today. We are familiar with Jewish musicians of Central European origins on Hungarian, European and international concert platforms. Roma continue to face social discrimination, but Roma bands can still be found performing in cafés throughout the region. True, music played by Roma can be very big business, but the Roma themselves are very lucky if they can benefit from it, either financially or with the artistic credit. For example, the Transylvanian Roma who are the stars of 'manele' music, a sort of equivalent of gangsta rap beloved by Romanian communities throughout Europe, are effectively the slaves of the Romanian criminal classes, playing at their beck and call, turning over to them virtually all of their earnings, including the money they make on European tours where they are feted as Roma.

[32] Walker (1988), pp. 139-40.
[33] Schlosz (1907), p. 67.
[34] Borgó (1993), p. 38.

The Jews of Central Europe were all but wiped out in the catastrophe of the mid-20th century; but a sole, and enchanting, aural souvenir of their musical cooperation with the Roma survives. In the early 1990s, the Hungarian folk-band Muzsikás joined with Roma musicians who before World War II had played with Jewish *kapelye* in Máramaros, to recreate their repertoire in their recording "Szóla a Kakas Már."[35]

As to who might have be regarded as the original 'owner' of "gypsy music" – an ironic perspective is given in a Jewish legend told in the booklet accompanying the Muzsikás CD, about the 18th century *tsadik* Rabbi Eizik of Nagykállö. This tale unwittingly gives a commentary on the 19th century development of the commercialization of music and the transformation of the genre.

> "On a walk, [Reb Eizik] heard a song from a shepherd boy. He was immediately captivated by its beauty and felt as if an inner voice was forcing him to learn it. He approached the shepherd boy and offered him two pennies for his song. At the moment the deal was made, the rabbi possessed the knowledge of the song. The shepherd boy, however, forgot it forever."

# *References*

[35] Muszikás, *"Szól a Kakas Mar: The Lost Jewish Music of Transylvania"*. Muszikás MU-002 (1992).

Bartók, Béla (1947). “Gypsy Music or Hungarian Music”, in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 240-257

Benda, Franz (1991), ed. Sonja Gerlach and Karl Rohrig. Sechs Sonaten für Violine und Basso Continuo. Munich: Henle

Bohlman, Philip V. (2008). *Jewish Music and Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Borgó, András (1993) “ "Pharao Barna Ivadékai" es a Klezmorim”, in *Muszika* 36 (9), pp. 32-39.

Burney, Charles (1959), ed. Percy A. Scholes. *Dr. Burney's Musical Tours in Europe*. (2 vols.). London: Oxford University Press.

Conway, David (2012). *Jewry in Music – Entry to the Profession from the Enlightenment to Richard Wagner*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Fraser, Angus (1995). *The Gypsies* (2nd edition). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

Handrigan, Nancy (1995). *On The "Hungarian" in Works of Brahms: A Critical Study*. MA Thesis, McMaster University. (https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/11150/1/fulltext.pdf), accessed 14.4.2022

Kolár, Angelika and Csilla Korenová (2015). “Obraz Táborenie husárov zo zbierok Gemersko-malohontského múzea na Svetovej výstave v Paríži v roku 1900”, in *Gemer-Malohont ročník 11 : zborník Gemersko-malohontského múzea v Rimavskej Sobote*, p.245-254. Rimavská Sobota: GMM

Lazslo, Erno (1966). “Hungarian Jewry: Settlement and Demography, 1735-38 to 1910” in *Hungarian-Jewish Studies* [vol. 1], pp. 61-136. New York: World Federation of Hungarian Jews.

Liszt, Franz (1881). *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* (2nd edition). Leipzig: Breitkopf et Haertel.

Marton, Ernest (Erno) (1966). “The Family Tree of Hungarian Jewry”, in *Hungarian-Jewish Studies* [vol. 1], pp. 1-60. New York: World Federation of Hungarian Jews.

McCagg, William O. (1989). *A History of Habsburg Jews, 1670-1918.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Moser, Andreas (1901), tr. Lilla Durham. *Joseph Joachim : a biography (1831-1899).* London : Wellby

Nettl, Paul (1951). *Forgotten Musicians*. New York: Philosophical Library.

Patai, Raphael (1996). *The Jews of Hungary*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Réti, Zoltan. (n.d.). “Márk Rózsavölgyi (1789-1848)”. *Website of the Balassagyarmat Jewish Community* (http://www.balassagyarmatizsidosag.hu/en/mark-rozsavolgyi), accessed 14.4.2022.

Sárosi, Bálint (1978). (tr. Fred Macnicol). *Gypsy Music.* Budapest: Corvina Press

Sárosi, Bálint (1986). (tr. Maria Steiner). *Folk Music: Hungarian Musical Idiom*. Budapest: Corvina

Sárosi, Bálint (2017) (tr. Judit Pokoly). *Bagpipers, Gypsy Musicians – Instrumental Folkmusic Tradition in Hungary*. Budapest: Nap Kiadó Kft.

Scheiber, Sandór (1968). "Review of "La pratique musicale savante dans quelques communautés juives en Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles" by Israel Adler" in *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 10, pp.198-200 .

Scheiber, Sandór (1976). "Jüdische Musiker in Ungarn im XVIII. Jahrhundert", in *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae,* vol. 18, pp. 335-337

Schlosz, Ludwig (1907). "Jüdische Zigeunerkapellen in Ungarn", in *Mitteilungen zur Jüdischen Volkskunde,* vol 23, no. 3, pp. 65-67.

Schneider, David (2000). " "Gypsies", Verbunkos, and Bartók's Debt to the Nineteenth Century", in *International Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 9, pp. 137-163

Szigeti, Joseph (1976). *With Strings Attached – Reminiscences and Reflections* (2nd edition: revised and enlarged). New York: Alfred A. Knopf

Walker, Alan (1988). *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1848* (2nd edition). London: Faber and Faber

Walker, Alan (1989). *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848-1861*. London: Faber and Faber.

Walker, Alan (1996). *Franz Liszt: The Final Years, 1861-1886*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf